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## Benazir Bhutto's assassination and the future of Pakistan

Harry der Nederlanden

One of the stellar voices for moderation in Pakistan and in the Islamic world has been silenced. Although a victory for Benazir Bhutto's party in the upcoming elections was hardly assured, and she may have had little success in bringing greater stability and direction to a divided country, she did have the ability to raise hopes and galvanize large numbers of followers.

It is doubtful that her Pakistan Peoples Party will function as well without her charismatic leadership. Leadership has devolved upon her 19-year-old son, Belavil Zardari,

an Oxford student with no political experience, chosen only because he is her son. So he becomes the candidate for the Prime Ministership of Pakistan for the largest political party in the country. The real power surely will be Bhutto's husband and Belavil's father, but he is tainted by corruption. However, Belavil's appointment, apparently by reason of Benazir's written will was challenged by the leader of the Bhutto clan. "The party has come into existence on the name and the sweat and the blood of the Bhutto family," said Mumtaz, 74, a long-time critic of Benazir who lives on a grand country estate in

Mirpur Bhutto, the original family village in Sindh province. Head of the 700,000-strong Bhutto tribe, Mumtaz served as the chief minister of Sindh province in Zulfikar Ali's government in the 1970s.

So it seems that Bhutto's People's party will go into the elections in disarray and perhaps without a real leader at the helm, as the son plans to continue his studies at Oxford and leave the actual leadership in the hands of his father.

Benazir's courage, commitment to an non-Islamist democratic government, her opposition to Islamic fundamentalism and

her openness to the West have made her a heroic figure in the West. Although she was "the most potent Pakistan voice for liberalism, tolerance and change" (David Ignatius of the *Washington Post*), her own party was hardly run democratically. She was the leader of the so-called People's Party for life largely because she was part of a large feudal, aristocratic family. As the appointment of her young son suggests, it is run very much along dynastic lines, for there were much more qualified leaders available from within the party – but they were not Bhuttos.

See **Butto** on page 3



## How Pentecostals brought 'the fiesta spirit' to church in Latin America

Sarah Miler Llana

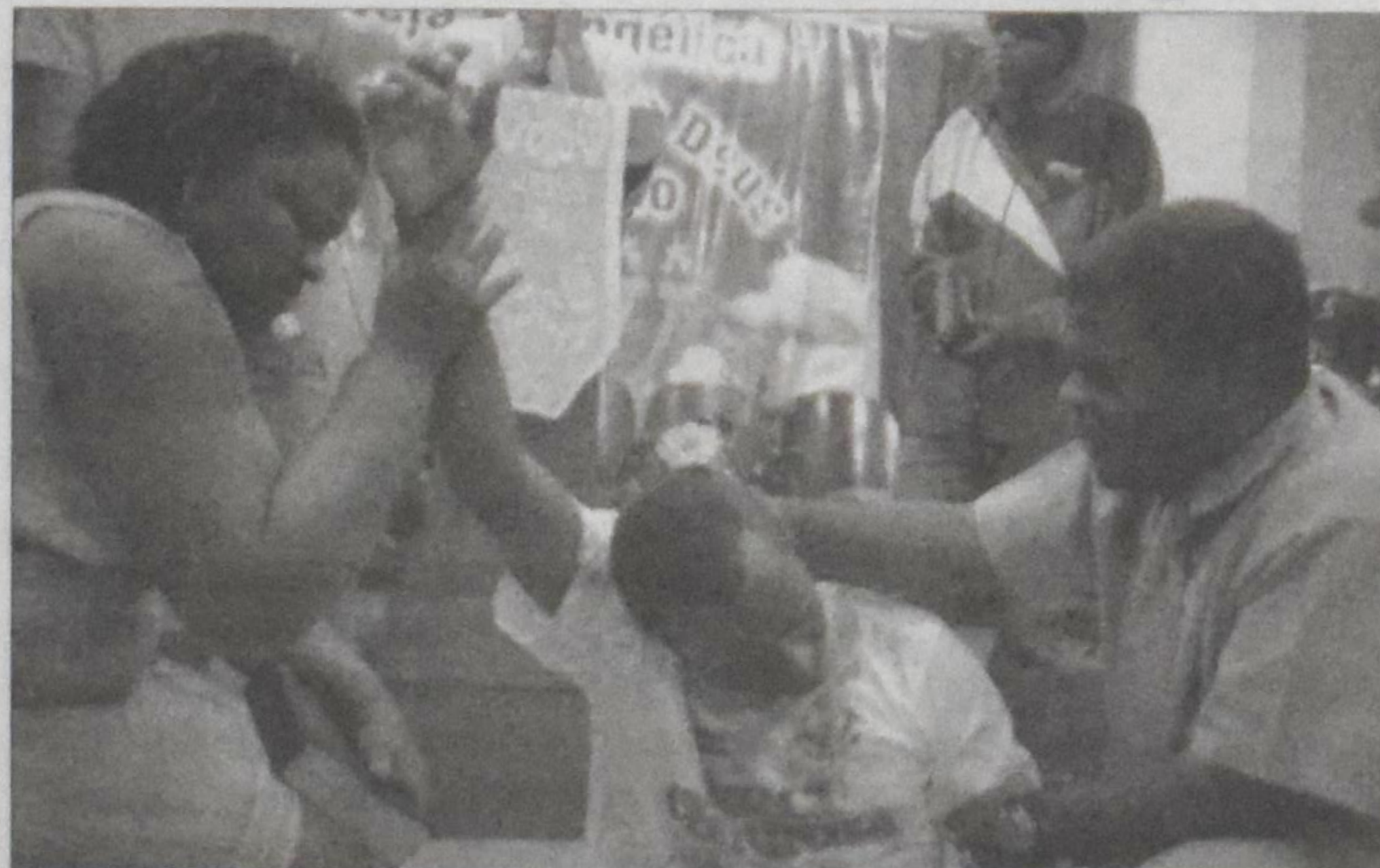
New Christian houses of worship are opening every day across the global south – from Africa to Asia to Latin America.

But most are not the traditional Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant sects that have dominated the Western world's religious-political affairs for centuries. The majority are Pentecostal.

Modern Pentecostalism, whose name comes from the biblical term Pentecost commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, grew out of the Holiness movement at the turn of the 20th century in the US.

Pentecostals place strong emphasis on personal experience with the "Holy Spirit," such as speaking in tongues, divine healing, and prophesying. In the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life survey in 2006, most Pentecostals said that they had experienced divine healings or received revelations from God.

"Renewalists," a term that includes those belonging to



Pentecostal denominations and "charismatics," who have adopted the expressive worship services of Pentecostals but belong to Catholic or mainline Protestant churches, now make up an estimated one quarter of the world's Christians, according to the World Christian Database. That number was just 6 percent 30 years ago.

For decades, Pentecostalism remained on the margins of US society, even as missionaries poured

into Latin America. Pentecostals now account for 13 percent of Latin Americans. When accounting for "charismatics," the number shoots up to 30 percent.

This conversion was once observed – mostly in awe – purely as a demographic trend. Attention is now turning to its deeper societal impact.

Scholars say there are many reasons why Pentecostalism has attracted so many adherents.

Aggressive evangelism, led at first by US missionaries, has certainly played a role. So has urban anomic and economic crisis. But each country has its own set of factors too, from civil war to natural disasters.

A 1976 earthquake in Guatemala, for example, brought a current of US Christians to Central America, says Paul Freston, a leading expert on religion in Latin America. Today the country has the highest percentage of Protestants in Latin America.

Pentecostals across the region, most of whom considered themselves Catholics before, say they converted in order to tackle their problems, for a sense of community, or simply because Pentecostalism offered something that the rituals of the Catholic mass did not. Most Pentecostal services today are rollicking events that include 10-piece bands, movie screens, and emotional testimonials – a reflection of society's preferences. It's what Luis Lugo, director of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public

Life, calls "bringing the fiesta spirit to church."

Pentecostals have been particularly skilled at reaching out to the region's poor, providing answers to the overwhelming problems their poverty provokes each day. The 1960s Catholic answer, came in the form of "liberation theology," a Marxist-tinged approach to addressing the needs of the oppressed. It had enthusiastic supporters across Latin America, but soon got wrapped up in cold war politics. Religious scholars often quip: "Liberation theology opted for the poor, and the poor opted for Pentecostalism."

"A lot of these folks are marginalized in their own societies, and here come the Pentecostals. They are not just meeting their spiritual needs," says Mr. Lugo, "they are providing them with an outlet for their own leadership. They provide a sense of empowerment, which no doubt has to be very attractive to people when nobody else [pays attention to] them."



## News

# Papua (Indonesia): Genocide by demographics

Elizabeth Kendal

WEA RLC – If present demographic trends continue, West Papua (formerly Irian Jaya) will be majority Indonesian (mostly Javanese) Muslim by 2011, and the indigenous Melanesian predominantly Protestant Christian Papuans will be a dwindling 15 percent minority by 2030. This was recently forecast in a conference at the University of Sydney (NSW, Australia) by Political Scientist Dr Jim Elmslie of the West Papua Project, which is based at the University of Sydney Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPACS).

Dr Elmslie also notes however that this forecast may prove unduly optimistic as it does not take into account the escalating HIV-AIDS infection rate amongst the Papuans or their declining population growth rate. In other words, the annihilation of the Papuans may be even more imminent than the demographic trends suggest. (Note: The Indonesian military introduced AIDS into the Papuan population by bringing in AIDS-infected Javanese prostitutes which they establish in Papuan villages and frequently use as currency.)

The issue of the decline in the Papuan population growth rate warrants further investigation. Several sources attest that Indonesia is targeting UN-funded family planning programs at the Papuan population, particularly in sensitive areas such as around the Freeport mine and in other areas slated for clearing and development.

According to Dr Elmslie, highland Papuans who allegedly have gonorrhoea are being treated in UN-funded family planning clinics – but not for gonorrhoea. They are being injected instead with long-term contraceptive drugs. As Dr Elmslie notes, this goes some way to explaining why the 1.67 percent population growth rate for Melanesian Papuans in West Papua is so much lower than over the 2.6 percent population growth rate for Melanesian Papuans over the border in Papua New Guinea (PNG). (Meanwhile, the growth rate for the non-Papuan population in West Papua is 10.5 percent.)

The issue of the genocide of the predominantly Christian Papuans must become an issue of urgency for the Church. The governments of the USA, Britain and Australia,

as well as other nations and bodies such as the UN, have geo-political and economic interests that pull them towards a preference for the status quo, regardless of consequences. By their action and inaction they are complicit and find the truth regarding the betrayal and genocide of a Christian people a most inconvenient truth indeed. The Church must act by making Papua a prayer priority and such an advocacy priority that the Papuans (like the South Sudanese and Iraq's Assyrians) become a domestic political issue that cannot be ignored. Indonesia must respect Papua's Special Autonomy status, and aggressive colonisation, militarisation and Islamisation must end.

As Dr Elmslie notes in his paper, the Genocide Convention of 1951 defines genocide as that which is "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" (Article II), and those interested in maintaining the status quo will focus on the word "intent" in order to argue that if intent cannot be proved then genocide cannot be claimed.

The issue of intent however has no bearing on the reality or outcome. As Dr Elmslie argues, semantics about whether or not there is "intent" should not stop the international community from recognising that an immense tragedy is unfolding in Papua, gross human rights abuses are occurring and the Papuans are being annihilated.

The most decisive statement to date on the subject of genocide in West Papua has come from the Allard K Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic Yale Law School, which in 2005 published a paper entitled "Indonesian Human Rights Abuses in West Papua: Application of the Law of Genocide to the History of Indonesian Control."

Quoting from page 72: "Although no single act or set of acts can be said to have constituted genocide, per se, and although the required intent cannot be as readily inferred as it was in the cases of the Holocaust or the Rwandan genocide, there can be little doubt that the Indonesian government has engaged in a systematic pattern of acts that has resulted in harm to – and indeed the destruction of – a substantial part of the indigenous population of West Papua.

"The inevitability of this result was readily obvious, and the government has taken no active measures to contravene. According to current understanding of the Genocide Convention, including its interpretation in the jurisprudence of the ad hoc international criminal tribunals, such a pattern of actions and inactions – of acts and omissions – supports the conclusion that the Indonesian government has acted with the necessary intent to find that it has perpetrated genocide against the people of West Papua."

Dr Elmslie fears the situation in West Papua, where Asian Muslims are completely dominating the military, education and business realms and where two distinct

peoples are increasingly on a collision course, is heading toward a "large scale, copybook genocide in the near future. With 'intent'."

This has been the fear of Papuans and religious liberty observers for some time. The Indonesian military (TNI), through barbaric killings and other acts of terror, is constantly attempting to provoke the Papuans into a response or a rebellion that would then provide the TNI with a pretext for wide-scale massacres in the name of curtailing the separatist threat and defending Indonesian security and sovereignty.

Papuan church leaders, who are the primary source of leadership for the Papuans, are doing a phenomenal job of keeping the traumatised Papuans restrained,

committed to non-violence, and focused on God in hope. They will undoubtedly inherit a peace prize from the Lord when they meet him. Meanwhile the TNI is busy not only provoking but manipulating and exploiting naive Papuan patriots by arming them and sending them to kill – as was the case in the August 2002 Freeport mine incident.

In such an explosive environment, "peace" (as in the absence of wide-scale slaughter) can not be taken for granted. An outrageous but very convenient (for some) holocaust is only a spark away.

*Elizabeth Kendall is chief researcher for World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty News & Analysis*

## Excerpt: demographic transition in West Papua

By Dr Jim Elmslie

Over the last 43 years in West Papua there have been many killings; disappearances; land expropriations and repressive Indonesian government policies that have severely affected the demographics of the province.... In 1971 there were 887,000 'Irian born' (Papuan) people in West Papua and 36,000 'non-Irian born' (Asian Indonesians), out of a total population of 923,000. This meant that, even after eight years of Indonesian control, Papuans comprised 96% of the population in 1971. Thereafter the distinction between Irian born and non-Irian became less relevant as, obviously, children of non-Irian born migrants were Irian born. I have derived the figure for the Papuan population in the 1990 census by dividing the population into those who speak Bahasa Indonesia as a 'mother tongue' and those who do not. This is because the census does not record the racial profile of the province. On this basis there were 1,215,897 Papuans and 414,210 non-Papuans in 1990 out of a total population of 1,630,107. Papuans comprised 74.6 % of the total and non-Papuans 25.4%. The growth in the Papuan population from 887,000 to 1,215,897 during the period from 1971 to 1990 represents an annual growth rate of 1.67%. Assuming that this growth rate continued to 2005, the latest figures released by the Indonesian Statistics Office, the Papua population would be 1,558,795 out of a total population of 2,646,48914 and the non-Papuan population 1,087,694. This means that Papuans comprised 59 percent of the population and non-Papuans 41percent in 2005. This analysis shows that the Papuan population has diminished as a proportion of the population from 96% to 59%, and the non-Papuan increased from 4% to 41%. This represents a growth in the Papuan population from 887,000 to 1,558,795 for the period 1971 to 2005, or 75.7%. By contrast the non-Papuan sector of the population has increased from 36,000 to 1,087,694, a growth of 3021% or more than 30 times. This represents an annual growth rate in the non-Papuan population of 10.5% from 1971 to 2005. Using the two growth rates for the Papuan and non-Papuan populations,

1.67% and 10.5% respectively, we can predict future population growth and relative percentages of the two groups. By 2011 out of a total population of 3.7 million, Papuans would be a minority of 47.5% at 1.7 million and non-Papuans a majority at 1.98 million, or 53.5%. This non-Papuan majority will increase to 70. 8% by 2020 out of a population of 6.7 million. By 2030 Papuans will comprise just 15.2% of a total population of 15.6 million, while non-Papuans will number 13.2 million, or 84.8%. This may be an unduly optimistic forecast for the Papuan population as the current HIVAIDS epidemic is firmly established in that population group and could have an African-style impact, cutting numbers and growth rates even further.

Besides the relative decline of the Papuans as a percentage of the population they have also enjoyed a much lower growth rate than a very similar Melanesian Papuan population across the border in Papua New Guinea. Here the population has been growing at 2.6% per annum since independence in 1975. PNG acts almost as a control population when examining Papuan growth rates as the indigenous people on both sides of the border are closely related and settled in societies that had, until very recently, been self-contained for thousands of years. If the Papuans under Indonesian control had enjoyed the same growth rate as those in independent Papua New Guinea, 2.6%, their population would be 2,122,921, or 564,126 more than it was in 2005. This demographic discrepancy can be attributed to Indonesian rule.

Thus from a position of comprising 96% of the total population in 1971, Papuans will be a small and dwindling minority within a generation or two. This will have great consequences for Papua New Guinea as Indonesian military/business groups engage ever more deeply in that country, particularly in the logging and retail industries. With the increasing militarisation of West Papua, particularly in the border regions, PNG's own security may come under threat.



## News

## Butto...continued from page 1

Although many journalists sort of overlook corruption charges against her as contrived by the military, an in-depth story by John Burns that appeared in the *New Yorker* a few years ago demonstrates convincingly that there were good grounds for those charges. Moreover, in her previous stints as Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir was hardly a whopping success at bringing greater unity and broader prosperity to the country. She strengthened the Taliban by using them against India in disputed border territories.

Her courage was obvious in her return to Pakistan – perhaps to the point of foolhardiness. As in her initial parade, she exposed herself and her followers unnecessarily. A few weeks ago she planned a long march that would have been even more dangerous than the rally at which she was slain. The government prohibited that venture because it could not begin to provide the necessary security. From the time she arrived, she was told both by the Musharraf government and the U.S. that the Taliban was planning her assassination.

Members of her party are charging that she was assassinated by agents of Musharraf's party. That seems highly unlikely, however, for the fallout of Bhutto's death will probably do harm to Musharraf's status and popularity. The increased instability and chaos undermines his image as the provider of stability for the country.

Stephen Cohen of the Brookings Institute, appearing on Newshour, described Bhutto's assassination as "a strengthening of the forces of darkness in Pakistan, who see this as a great victory." An al Qaeda spokesman said, "We terminated the most precious American asset which vowed to defeat the mujahedeen." Despite her failing, said Cohen, he saw her as "the best hope for a moderate, reasonably secular Pakistan in tune with the rest of the world and Islam."

However, a Pakistani who served under Benazir's father (later executed by the military), pointed out that the Bhuttos are part of a small elite that has ruled Pakistan during its 50 years of independence. Both of them, civilian or military elites, have done little for human development. Pakistan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world – 50 percent.

Ahmad Rashad, writing in the *National Post* (Dec. 29) argues that the policies not just of Musharraf but also of Bhutto when

Sara Miller Llana

After setting off from Rome this May on his first trip to Latin America, the world's most Roman Catholic region, Pope Benedict XVI made a top concern clear: These are "difficult times for the church," he told hundreds of bishops in Brazil, amid "aggressive proselytizing" by born-again Protestant congregations.

The times are particularly difficult in Brazil, which has seen a dramatic decline in Catholicism in urban areas, says Timothy Shah, adjunct senior fellow for religion and foreign policy at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington.

It is also a fascinating time, he says. Brazil can now claim to be both the world's largest Catholic country and one of the largest Pentecostal nations, he notes.

But proselytism alone cannot account for one of religion's most dramatic demographic shifts: The number of Protestants increased from 6.6 percent of the Brazilian population in 1980 to 15.4 percent 20 years later.

The Pentecostal movement began here in the early 20th century, with an Italian missionary establishing the first Pentecostal church in 1910 in São Paulo, according to the Washington-based Pew Research Center.

Subsequent waves followed, beginning in the 1950s and '60s.

In the past two decades, Pentecostals have gone mainstream – with television stations and political candidates.

Brazil's religious landscape has since changed more than most Latin

she was in power strengthened the Islamist forces in the country. These are mostly Taliban, but the latter have been further radicalized and mobilized by contact with al Qaeda in the northwestern border provinces. But the Taliban have grown under Musharraf not just in the frontier regions but also in recruiting well-educated youth in the cities. They have gained positions in the army, the intelligence services and the paramilitary Frontier Corps. So the Taliban and al Qaeda are sure to take advantage of the leadership vacuum and bring even more turmoil and violence in the near future.

Commentators in the West raise worrying questions about the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal in the event that the chaos escalates to the point where Islamist seize power in the country. Soldiers



American countries.

John Burdick, an associate professor of anthropology at Syracuse University in New York, explains that non-Catholic religions tend to take root in places without a strong presence of Catholic institutions, which have had a near monopoly on Latin America since it was colonized.

Brazil has a particularly low ratio of priests to parishioners. The Getulio Vargas Foundation in Rio de Janeiro released a report upon the pope's arrival in May showing four Protestant ministers in Brazil for every Catholic priest.

In favelas, or shantytowns, throughout Rio de Janeiro, there's always a small Pentecostal church within walking distance. Sometimes there is only one Catholic church in a favela.

In rural areas, says Mr. Burdick, it is not uncommon for a priest to appear just once a month. "The more densely present you have Catholic institutions in rural areas or urban areas ... the more you can 'resist'

sent to fight the Taliban in the tribal regions have laid down their arms rather than fight. Some see this as a sign that the radicals have infiltrated deeply into the army, and not just as a reluctance to kill their own countrymen.

The Pakistan government, however, has assured the West that the security of its nuclear arsenal is "foolproof" and warned against needless alarm.

Much now depends on how Musharraf handles the turmoil, the demonstrations and the political campaigning, which will doubtlessly incite more violence. But his past actions give little grounds for confidence in this respect. His postponement of the elections to February 18 was probably wise, but distrust runs so deep in Pakistan among the various factions and parties that all actions are greeted with suspicion.

Protestantism," he says.

Brazil also has one of the world's greatest disparities between rich and poor and is marked by a violent urban culture. Pentecostal churches have been particularly appealing to those in need of the solutions to the problems provoked by both.

It is what David Smilde, in his new book "Reason to Believe," calls cultural agency, a way that poor Latin Americans can gain control over their immediate social contexts.

Drug and gang violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men, but women are victimized every day: they cover for their sons and boyfriends, they witness

daylight shootouts, they have just as much at stake.

That was evident on a recent day during a skit enacted by Pentecostals at the Assembly of God New Zion church in Rio de Janeiro.

The play opened with "gunmen" storming into the church and Maria Aparecida de Carvalho burst into tears. She thought it was real.

"I live here and see a lot of these things," she says later, nervously folding a handkerchief back and forth in her hands.

The "play," which church members perform for other congregations and schools around Rio, involves the story of a drug dealer who can't come up with the money to give his bosses and is about to be executed. In Mangueira, there's nothing fictional about the plotline.

This church, Ms. de Carvalho says, is her only haven, and her faith, her body of armor.

Pentecostals often walk around with their Bibles in their hands. They do it out of faith, but it's seen as a preventive measure too, their own antidote to violence. "[Pentecostalism] provides people with a way of navigating a crime-filled context," says Mr. Smilde.

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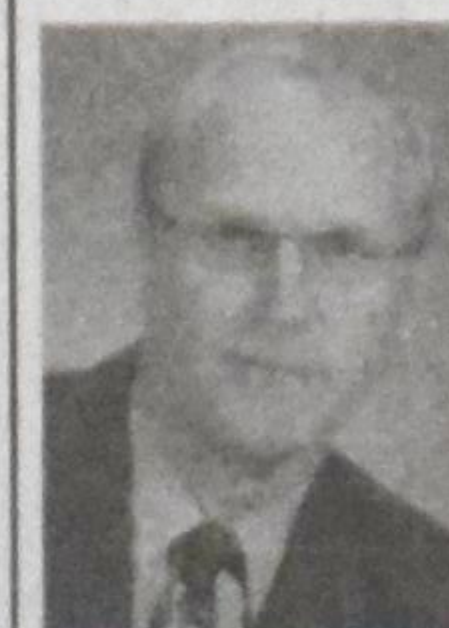
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## Editorial

# Canada's government needs to develop a better strategy to reduce poverty

Harry der Nederlanden

Poverty, more specifically child poverty, has been much in the news recently. Much of the focus, however, has been on the definition of poverty used to generate the statistics, rather than on strategies for reducing poverty.

According to a report issued by the poverty group Campaign 2000, Canada has made little or no headway in eradicating poverty over the past two decades. It claims that 1 in 8 Canadian children lives in poverty and that this rate has remained unchanged since 1989. The standard used designates any family that spends 20 percent more of their gross income on food, shelter and clothing than the average Canadian as living in poverty. It is thus a relative measure.

Niels Veldhuis of the conservative Fraser Institute points out that the statistics measure inequality rather than some absolute measure of poverty. These people have less relative to other Canadians.

The United Way put forward even scarier statistics, however: it says that nearly 30 percent of Toronto's families live in poverty. In Toronto, a two-parent family with two children living on less than \$27,500 is living in poverty.

Using similar statistics but different calculations, Lorne Gunther, a conservative columnist of the *National Post*, comes up with very different interpretation. He concludes that "the past decade has witnessed a tremendous success in the eradication of poverty." He discerns a drop in poverty from 16 percent a decade ago to less than 11 percent today. The poverty rate for single mothers has fallen from 52.7 percent to 29.1 percent – still high, he admits, but a big improvement. By his calculations, the number of children living in poverty has fallen more than a third since 1996.

Much of this drop, he admits, is due to better job prospects in a stronger economy and policies that have forced more of those on welfare to find jobs.

But whatever statistics you accept, poverty is still a major issue that needs to be addressed on all levels of government.

Leaders in the CRC community have addressed the government on the issue of poverty in recent months. Gerald Vandezande, in a presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance dated Nov. 26, 2007 reminds the government of its own promises and of a four-day National Roundtable on Poverty and Homelessness in March 2006 that brought together several hundred front-line poverty workers from across Canada. "These concerned Canadians, together with the members of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's Roundtable and knowledgeable representatives of the many Canadians of Christian faith believe that 'the care of poor and vulnerable people of all ages is a central tenet of our own faith, of good government, and of responsible, compassionate citizenship'."

Drawing on the Manifesto produced by the roundtable, Vandezande says, "We further believe, and we hope you and your colleagues also do, that 'justice and mercy define good government and that homelessness must be a priority for policy makers across Canada concerned with justice and mercy'."

He then posed questions to the Prime Minister which he had already asked in an earlier letter:

*Will you initiate innovative legislation and implement creative budget investments that effectively address the national economic and social deficits and crises? These crises increasingly plague Canada's Aboriginal Peoples, as well as millions of other Canadians who live in abject poverty due to various morally unacceptable failures of our federal, provincial and municipal governments to practice full-fledged justice and mercy.*

*Will you and your government act now on a non-partisan basis, and in close cooperation with community-based front-line workers who signed the Manifesto, regarding Canada's scandalous homelessness and poverty? These grave injustices are utterly unworthy of a wealthy nation that could be an international beacon of freedom, hope, justice, and "peace, order, and good government."*

*Millions of Canadians are expecting you and all MPs to drop their ideological party agendas to deliver the political goods and equitable fiscal measures and thus help consistently build a strong and free nation! Couldn't Parliament at least allocate 50 percent of the annual budget surplus to help fight homelessness and poverty?*

The Canadian Council of Churches, representing 21 churches, including the CRC, also addressed the government on the issue of poverty in a letter late last year. After spelling out the religious motives for their concern, the council goes on to challenge the government to develop a clear, coherent strategy to reduce poverty in Canada. Here are some excerpts from the letter:

*In his life and ministry, Jesus identifies with and is present among "the least of these." We see all*

*humans as possessing a profound dignity because all have been created in the image of God. Poverty is an assault upon the dignity of the poor, robbing them of the opportunity to develop and share their gifts with the world. Poverty also undermines the dignity of the wealthy, for when we fail to share our goods and selves with the poor we fail to live out the image of God who gave his life for the healing of the world.*

It goes on to address practical issues:

*The barriers that prevent people from living fully differ across Canada and between communities. This is why developing and implementing a poverty reduction strategy is important. An effective strategy will pay attention to particular groups with specific needs, such as: the more than 750,000 children whose life chances are limited by conditions of poverty; the 42 percent of urban Aboriginals who live in poverty as well as Aboriginal People living on reserves or remote areas; the increasing number of immigrants who remain in poverty up to a decade after coming to Canada. Canada is a prosperous country that can afford to do better. We note the growing level of wealth among the richest in Canadian society, while others lack basic resources such as affordable housing and decent wages for the work they do, face discrimination and racism because of their ethnic, cultural or national heritage, or are prevented by poverty from learning the skills necessary to succeed in the 21st century economy.*

The letter warns:

*The growing gap between the wealthiest and those living on the margins in Canada threatens the social cohesion that gives Canada a positive reputation in the world.*

And it ends with a challenge to the government:

*Together, as Canadian Christian religious leaders, we call on the Canadian government to establish a high level government task force mandated to develop a national poverty reduction strategy. We propose that the task force include people living in poverty, immigrants, and representatives of Aboriginal communities, along with people who work with them.*

*An effective national poverty reduction strategy in our view must include measurable goals and timelines, publicly comprehensible indicators that measure the poverty in Canada, and a means for monitoring and evaluating progress. Most of all it must include budget commitments that focus on the needs of vulnerable people. Because the lives of people are at stake, we further urge the government to establish this task force and initiate a poverty reduction strategy within the next budget year.*

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## Review

# Feeling at home in Alfalfa

Henny Hamilton

What do you get when you mix the love and labour of Redeemer University College professors, students, and alumni with picturesque vignettes of small-town life in Ontario? The answer is *Home in Alfalfa*, the recently produced mainstage play at Redeemer.

*Home in Alfalfa* began as a wonderfully written narrative by Hugh Cook, Professor Emeritus, was adapted into a theatrical and lyrical script by Raymond Louter, head of the Theatre Arts department, received a musical score from Ryan McKenna, Redeemer alumnus, and was brought to life by a talented group of students on November 20-24, 2007 under the direction of long-time friend of Redeemer theatre, Tom Carson.

The play consists of a series of interrelated stories presenting the lives of those individuals who make up the town of Alfalfa, a typical Dutch farming community in southwestern Ontario. The relatively large cast succeeded in creating a "small town feel" where gossip runs rampant in the local coffee shop while outsiders are welcomed with open arms and adopted into the community without question. Excessive competition, religious turmoil, marital distress, alcoholism, and even death do not steer clear of Alfalfa. However, there does not seem to be a group of people who could handle such difficulties with more poise than the town's inhabitants.

When a photographer and passerby, Paul Moffat, stops in Alfalfa to observe and photograph the annual Alfalfa day festivities, a local artist promises him that "not everything about a town can be seen through the lens of a camera, or when you drift through it. Takes about a year – a circuit of the sun – for things to become... more." Not one to refuse a challenge, Moffat, played by Noah Hicks, resigns himself to stay for a year and soon finds himself falling in love with the well-traveled and happily single yet not-getting-any-younger-so-her-mother-tells-her editor of the *Alfalfa Sentinel-Star*, V. W. (Virginia Wiebinga), played by Stephanie Elgersma.

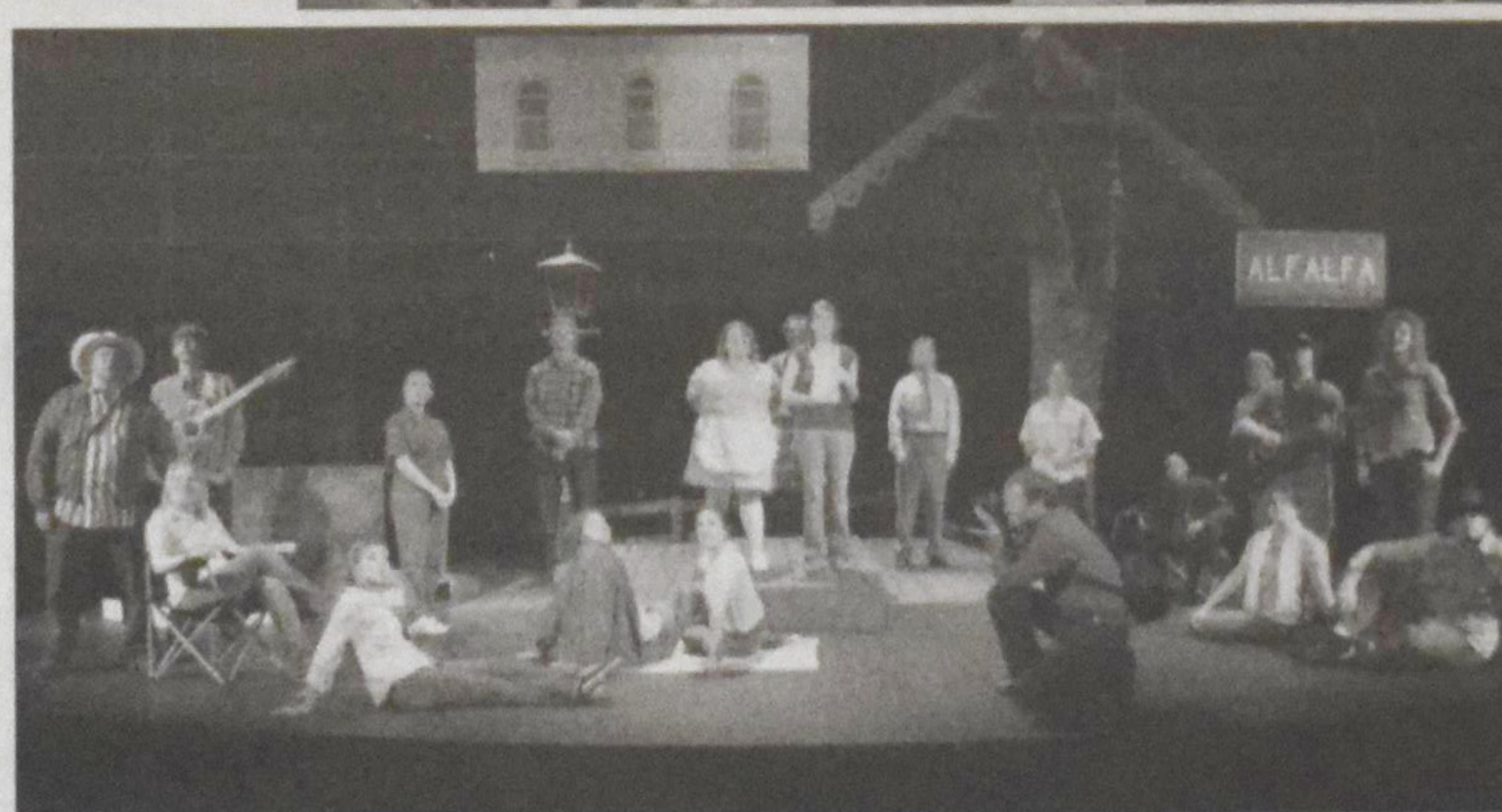
Both Hicks and Elgersma delivered believable performances as the romantically uninclined and perfect-

ly matched pair. Other commendable performances include Denise Chan's charming portrayal of Bonnie, the owner of Lucille's Lunch, the local coffee shop, Aaron Craig's depiction of the painfully useless Sergeant Lofthouse, and the heartwarming and overbearing characterizations of Harm and Florence Wiebinga by Ryan Sero and Kaitlyn McGee. However, expertly playing both the stereotypical macho yet endearing Al Rozema and the unsocialized, eccentric Myron Q. Fowles, Kevin Lobert was easily the audience's favourite, and they craved his appearance on stage.

The simplistic and evocative set was eye catching. The bright blue sign hanging alone on the right side of the stage, stating simply, "Alfalfa," is just as "pretty" as Virginia describes it. A rotating piece on the left of the stage provided both outdoors scenery and the counter and bar stools of Lucille's Lunch. However, despite the functional quality of this set piece, the set changes on the opposite side of the stage left something to be desired. Much time was spent exchanging tables and chairs for a writer's desk and audience attention was lost during some of these intervals in action. Lighting and costuming wisely followed the simple and naturalistic tone of the set design.

Markedly, the true strength of the show lies in its creative musicality. The cast takes McKenna's musical direction with attentive focus and seeming ease. Several characters double as talented guitarists and passionate vocalists. Though the play's theme song, "Home in Alfalfa," brings the audience into and out of the quaint country town, it is the tenderness of "Tang of Fall," the playfulness of "Cold Outside, Warm in Here," and the deep resonance of Kristofer Van Soelen's "Secrets of a Man's Heart" that bring chills and smiles.

*Home in Alfalfa* is a delightful production, tearing at the heartstrings of the romantic, tickling the funny bone of the comic, and demonstrating the charm of small-town living to even the most cynical city dweller.



## Aqsa Parvez, continued from page 7

in his Muslim faith that influenced him to act so outrageously?"

His answer seems to be a hesitant yes, for he writes that in some Islamic cultures, including Pakistan, women are seen as "symbols of a family's honour and virtue." That's why when Ms. Parvez decided to stop wearing the hijab, family members would see this act as "defying the social order that undergirds her community's distinctive development and identity."

Emon concludes this article with trying to do justice to both sides, but he again does so by raising a number of questions. So he asks what it is that members of a traditional community fear to lose when they move to a country with a different culture. But the final sentence is directed at us non-Muslims who are shocked by a father's alleged murder of his daughter for removing her veil. He writes: "(H)ow might we create a climate where newcomers can openly participate in our society and culture with limited angst, while we celebrate together in what all of us bring to our shores"

## The elephant in the room

How evenhanded. And how utterly beside the point. There is a complete unwillingness to confront the reality mentioned by Mansur and others, including countless people who have firsthand experience of the suffocating tyranny and violence spread in the name of radical Islam, reaching even into the Western democracies.

Who are you going to believe, the learned professor who speaks in riddles, or those who tell it as it is? Let me conclude with this blunt statement from John Oakley, Toronto radio host, who commented on the murder of Aqsa Parvez as follows:

*No one is on a witch hunt here trying to demonize an entire faith, but rather to get to the bottom of what seems to be a nasty little secret within a certain segment of the community; women are treated as second-class citizens. If that is, in fact, at the root of violence and abuse meted out by some Muslim men, it's high time to take ownership and confront the elephant in the room.... Denial is not an option."*

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## Commentary

# Who killed Aqsa Parvez?

*By the complete failure of the West to understand Islam and its secular prophets who evict Christianity from the academy, we are gambling away our own destiny. If this trend continues the survival of our cultural context will become "merely academic."*

(Ravi Zacharias, RZIM newsletter, vol.11, Fall 2007)

*The murder of Aqsa Parvez and of countless other women among Muslims will continue not merely because Muslims cower in silence in their fear of radical Islamists, but also for the apathy of the Western public and politicians supinely appeasing and accommodating Muslim organizations such as the CIC.*

(Salim Mansur, "Bigotry, Terror Masked as Faith," *Toronto Sun*, December 15, 2007)

## Harry Antonides

When the news broke in Mississauga, Ontario on Monday, December 10, that the father of 16-year old Aqsa Parvez had been charged with murdering her, it was greeted with a mixture of shock and utter disbelief.

More details revealed that this tragic

event was the outcome of a conflict between a strict Muslim father and his teenage daughter who longed for the freedom she saw all around her. This conflict came to a head when the daughter left home and refused to continue wearing the headscarf that marked her as a Muslim believer. Attempts by

others to mediate were futile, her life was cut short, a family cruelly ripped apart and cast into the depth of sadness and despair.

## Nagging questions

Far be it from us to coldly sit in judgment, while ignoring that here is a family that must be going through the depth of remorse, loss, and confusion. But the nagging questions will not go away, and we should seek some answers. What is it that makes a parent suppress every spark of natural tenderness and love toward his own offspring? What kind of compulsion drives a person to kill his own daughter and thereby bring utter ruin to his own household?

The overriding question is of course: Was

this murder an instance of the horribly misnamed honour killings that occur in certain Muslim communities where fathers exercise absolute authority in the family? In such settings women are treated as objects who are required to live within a strictly prescribed set of moral restraints, governing every aspect of their lives, especially their relationship to members of the opposite sex.

A subservient wife and daughter bring honour to the father of the household. But the opposite is also true. When a wife or daughter seeks to escape his authority that is seen as a shameful failure. There have been all too many cases where the father and/or other male members of the family have killed women and girls who have tried to escape their bondage. Most of these killings occur in Muslim countries. But such crimes are perpetrated even in the free West, where authorities sometimes turn a blind eye.

Though the details of the circumstances surrounding the death of the young, headstrong Aqsa Parvez, are not known, we can all be sure and agree on one thing: Nothing justifies such an evil deed. Everyone is in full agreement, but there ensued a vigorous debate among Muslims and others about the deeper motivations behind this murder.

## Denial

There were those who thought that this was just another unfortunate but typical family quarrel between a first and second generation of immigrants. The first generation, not well adjusted and suspicious about their new environment, wants to jealously protect their children against what they perceive to be an alien way of life. This sort of conflict between two generations of newcomers, especially those arriving from non-Western countries, happens all the time, so the argument went.

The *National Post* published an editorial, "The Meaning of Aqsa Parvez," on December 12 in which it tried to put to rest the notion that her death might signal that "the loathsome and barbaric practice of Muslim 'honour killings' is making its way from South Asia and the Middle East to Canada."

The *Post* editor observed that this tragic death shows that the assimilation process of some families can be so rapid and wrenching that a parent can be driven to kill his own child. The editorial concluded with this soothing reassurance: "But it is rare enough that we may at least view it as an isolated criminal act, not part of a larger epidemic."

The murdered girl's brother Mohammad Shan Parvez told a reporter that his family is sick with grief but that what happened is not about culture. Others were all too ready to chime in. A Newmarket mosque sent a news release that called Aqsa's death "a tragedy beyond reason."

Sameer Zuberi is a spokesperson for the Canadian branch of the Council on American-Islamic Relations – CAIR-CAN – an organization that is quick to report real or imagined instances of discrimination against Muslims in Canada and the U.S. He stated: "Teen

## Eternal Student

Peter Schuurman



# A theology of peek-a-boo

Nothing is so hilarious to my 15 month-old son than me disappearing behind a wall, sofa, or cupboard door and then a second later popping back into view. His eyes lighten up, his eight teeth all come out to shine, and he laughs like he's being tickled in the tummy. This is an amusing game and can be repeated umpteen times without losing its sense of surprise.

Peter Berger's book *Redeeming Laughter* (1997) draws no small theological substance out of this horseplay. He begins by explaining that the vanishing parent causes a depth of anxiety in the child. Well, for those of us who have small children, that puts it rather mildly. When little Joseph perceives that one of us (mostly my wife, Joy) is about to leave, his face turns deep red and his expression immediately becomes horribly, excruciatingly distressed, and the soul-wrenching wail that you know is coming is assured by the extended length of time it takes for him to inhale. Sheer terror is a better word than anxiety to describe this trauma in a child's life.

However, in the peek-a-boo game when the parent reappears after a brief absence, the sense of relief in the child is so profound it can only result in delight and a burst of laughter. Witness on a grander scale when a parent comes home from a day away: the child comes running and sometimes screaming to re-connect with the parent. It is as if they say, "Aiy-yi-yi – you're here after all!"

## Advent by another name

This, according to Berger, is the drama of redemption in the light of faith. He explains it this way:

*God's dealings with mankind can be seen as a cosmic game of hide-and-seek. We catch a glimpse of Him and the He promptly disappears. His absence is a central feature of our existence, and the ultimate source of all our anxieties. Religious faith is the hope that He will eventually reappear, providing ultimate relief, which, precisely, is redemption.*

In other words, peek-a-boo can be another word for advent, although I can't see them changing the church calendar terminology soon.

The Eastern Orthodox have a particular liturgy Berger says can visually represent this cosmic game of peek-a-boo. The icon screen that separates the altar from the rest of the sanctuary in an Orthodox Church has special doors that the clergy pop in and out of during the service. Apparently there is a specific point in the service where the priest goes out through the door and the deacon says in the vernacular: "Now you see him, now you don't see him." This is the drama of the life of faith.

## Echoes of a voice

N. T. Wright's recent book *Simply Christian: Why Christianity*

*Makes Sense* (2006) similarly suggests that human experience provides us with intimations of another world, or as he says, "echoes of a voice" that call us towards God's reality in Christ. Our experiences of injustice, ugliness, and broken relationship all reveal to us our deep yearning for true justice, beauty, and community. Either these yearnings are deceptive illusions or they are each "a signpost pointing away into a mist, telling us that there is a road ahead which leads to ... well, which leads somewhere we might want to go." In other words, all of life is sacramental – a visible or palpable sign of an invisible grace.

Wright doesn't mention humor as a signpost, but he easily could have. Berger says that tragedy can appear to us as the heavy fact of life while comedy often seems to be the frivolous distraction. This rings especially true when we have experienced a deep loss. But through the eyes of faith, the reality is reversed. Because we trust a new world awaits, tragedy (although still painful) takes on a temporary quality. The experience of comedy, which like the parent jumping back into view in the end, is the ultimate truth of created life.

This is why when a parent picks up a crying baby and soothes the baby by saying, "Everything is going to be alright!" they are not deceiving the child. In the immediate present, yes, everything is going to be alright. But in the ultimate sense, too, says Berger. There is destitution, decay, and death, which is not alright. But that is not the last word to the person of faith. Someday, somehow, everything is going to be alright. God is coming again and will rule forever and ever. The Bible tells us so. That is something to grip onto for dear life.

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed Education Mission Leader and resides in Guelph, Ontario.





## Stewardship

rebellion is something that exists in all households in Canada and is not unique to any culture or background. Domestic violence is also not unique to Muslims."

Shahina Siddique, president of the Islamic Social Services, agreed that the death of this young girl "was the result of domestic violence, a problem that cuts across Canadian society and is blind to color or creed." Twenty Muslim organizations sent an open letter to the prosecutors asking for the strongest possible punishment for her killer, and "zero tolerance for violence of any kind against women or girls."

### Telling it as it is

But others were not convinced by the argument that this was just another case of teenage rebellion. Interestingly, some of the doubters were Muslims. Tarek Fatah (author of a forthcoming book, *Chasing a Mirage: The Tragic Illusion of an Islamic State*) and Farzana Hassan, both members of the Muslim Canadian Congress, published an article in the *National Post* of December 12, under the heading "The Deadly Face of Muslim Extremism."

The two authors write that Canadians are justified in wondering whether the death of this young woman is "a sign of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism." They explain that radical Muslim men consider themselves responsible for the conduct of their girls and women. But this is an outlook "rooted in a medieval ethos that treats women as nonpersons.... If their conduct is seen as contravening this austere religious outlook, they are invariably subjected to abuse."

The authors claim that Muslims steeped in this version of Islam are ignoring the Koranic exhortations for compassion and tolerance. They take issue with those imams in Canadian mosques who preach Islamic fundamentalism and warn girls that by taking off their hijabs they would cease to be Muslims. Fatah and Hassan leave no doubt about their total rejection of radical Islam:

*Muslims need to stand up to this sort of emotional and religious blackmail by imams who spread the competing agendas of Saudi Arabia and Iran into Canada. Young Aqsa Parvez's death cannot be reversed. But in her memory, we can at least challenge those whose message leads to rage and madness.*

Another prominent and courageous Canadian Muslim critic of radical Islam is Salim Mansur, political science professor at Western University. In his December 15 column in the *Toronto Sun* he writes that this murder "was prompted by an ideology of bigotry and terror masked as a faith-tradition – an ideology of radical Islamism at war with the modern world of freedom and democracy."

Mansur predicts that Muslim apologists in Canada will do their best to characterize the murder of Aqsa Parvez "like any other crime that cuts across ethnic and faith boundaries." He warns against Muslim organizations – "such as the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) in free societies such as Canada" which serve as "front organizations for global radical Islamism making apologies for their ideological brethren, and directing polemics against the West for victimizing Muslims and undermining Islam."

This is exactly what some Muslim apologists attempted to do in connection with the death of Aqsa Parvez. Here are two examples of this attempt to shift blame for this horrendous act.

### More denial

Haroon Siddiqui, started his December 16 *Toronto Star* column: "No sooner had the news of the Aqsa

Parvez murder filtered out than cultural warfare broke out." I gleaned from that opening and what followed that he is of the opinion that what Mansur, Fatah, Hassan and other likeminded critics are saying amounts to a form of "mob mentality." He also referred to this as "block thinking." He ridiculed those who view this murder in the context of Islamic fundamentalism.

In contrast to Siddiqui's blunderbuss approach, assistant professor Anver Emon, who teaches Islamic law at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, used a far more subtle argument. Nonetheless, he makes the same point, if I understand his tortuous arguments correctly, that the murder of this young Muslim girl cannot be attributed to Islam. In doing so he uses a flood of academic jargon that may baffle the uninitiated.

For example, in a brief statement published in the *National Post* on December 12, he framed this murder as a criminal justice case, and as a matter involving the principle of multiculturalism that cuts both ways – "i.e. how do 'we' Canada accommodate the 'other,' and how does the 'other' accommodate 'our' Canadian values." This, he writes, implies a multi-layered dialogue in which the question who gets to speak for the "us" and the "them" is going to be a "highly political contest that we may or may not be able to engage." He continues:

*Third, implicit in the multi-layered dialogue is a need for education, a curricular response that can foster greater understanding so that the lines that demarcate the "us" and the "them" do not become essentialized as to be obstacles to building a Canadian community that is authentically committed to its principles of multiculturalism.*

"Education and a curricular response"? That would require more Muslim teachers of Islamic law and customs, wouldn't it?

In another article published in the *National Post* of December 14, Emon agonized about the death of Aqsa Parvez by reflecting on the way he teaches his students by shifting back and forth from common law reasoning to Islamic doctrines. He is convinced that Islamic tradition does not condone the crime Ms. Parvez's father is alleged to have committed. Yet he wonders: "But is it possible that there is something

## Taking care of business

Ministry and calling are words that most of us would apply to the work of missionaries, pastors and evangelists. However, not everyone is called to drop everything to follow Jesus like the sons of Zebedee (Matthew 4:18, 19) who dropped their fishing gear and left their father to follow Jesus. Some of us are also called to stay behind to be good fisherman of fish. Running a business, I believe, is a calling as well.

It seems to me that business people are often unfairly treated from the perspective of ministry. Sure, when a successful businessperson donates a substantial sum to a good cause, the publicity is there and the person is raised to almost the level of a saint. However, this does not focus on the challenge of faithful stewardship that a businessperson faces each day in running his or her business. Just consider the load of responsibility that comes with a business decision, which affects the livelihood, and future of all the employees that work in the business. Add to that the challenge of making decisions that are faithful to Christian standards: decisions that are fair, have integrity and a Christian Stewardship perspective – that is, a perspective that all the resources used in the business are God's and as a businessperson I must be a wise steward. I'm convinced that in many ways being a Christian businessperson is a calling, and specifically so when we realize that God is the owner of the business in the first place!

Having a kingdom perspective while leading and managing a business elevates the 'taking-care-of-business' to a higher level ministry mode: providing fair and safe employment for workers and useful products and services. Our focus goes beyond the here and now to what God would want us to do. It is very much a question of 'how' – of performance and having the right attitude. Having a 'kingdom perspective' when running a business changes the 'how'. As I write, I realize that in humility many of us in business may squirm a little as we often get so compromised. Let's admit that we make mistakes and need God's forgiveness and grace!

In today's competitive business environment, taking care of business with a 'Kingdom Perspective' may make you less competitive. Following a higher code of standards that others ignore puts you at a disadvantage – at least in the short run. It is tempting to drop your standards to those of your competitors so that

you can stay competitive, but it may hurt in the long-term and that is a big responsibility when you consider how your employees and their families depend on your business for their paycheck. Here's the comfort, though: you are not alone. If you remain faithful to a 'Kingdom Perspective' you recognize God's role in your business. If we are faithful to God in our business, then I believe the same promises that God makes to Israel are applicable to us. Malachi 3 illustrates God's role so well:

*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit, says the Lord Almighty. (Malachi 3:10, 11)*

In business, as in all aspects of our Christian walk, God wants to be an enabler. God chose to bring about his Kingdom through people like you and me. If we faithfully take care of business from a faithful kingdom perspective – God is ready to open the 'floodgates' so that we through our businesses can be a source of blessing. May God bless each Christian businessperson in his or her calling!

**Stewardly tip: Post your values.** Mission and vision statements are often posted in churches and institutions. For businesses, it is often only the 'tag' line that gets published, beyond that it is helpful to post your business values – your underlying operating code of business. Posting this publicly reminds your staff and customers alike of the standards you hold and may be held accountable for.

**Readers:** Share your 'Stewardly tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestions (by mail to *Christian Courier* or by email to my address below) and provide your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask you for more details.

Next issue: Environmental Collapse?

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See Aqsa Parvez on page 5



## Church

### Global church groups urge reparations to atone for slave trade

Runaway Bay, Jamaica (ENI) – Many churches were actively involved in the transatlantic slave trade and they need to offer reparation to descendants of those enslaved, tortured and murdered by the trade, an international church conference has demanded.

“While there have been some acts of repentance and confessional statements made by some churches, for the most part those statements have not been effective enough in eradicating white supremacy, systemic racism and the ongoing legacy of the transatlantic trade in Africans,” participants at the December 10-14 meeting in Runaway Bay, Jamaica, said in a statement.

The gathering was sponsored by the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Council for World Mission. It marked the 200th anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act by the British parliament. Sixty theologians, church leaders and activists from Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas attended the event called “Abolished, but not Destroyed: Remembering the Slave Trade in the 21st Century.”

“The statement sends a strong message challenging churches to look at their own past complicity in the evil of slavery and the slave trade and be at the forefront of exposing modern forms of slavery and oppression of people based on caste, race, gender or economic status,” said WARC general secretary the Rev. Setri Nyomi.

Between the 16th and 19th centuries, an estimated 15 million Africans were forcibly removed from their homes and shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to become slaves in the Caribbean and the Americas.

“Many churches were actively involved in the transatlantic slave trade in Africans and colonialism,” the statement asserted. As a result, the church’s mission was “seriously compromised and betrayed” it said.

“The process of reparations requires the restoration of relationships that affirm the dignity and humanity of all parties in order to repair what has been broken,” the statement noted. “Reparation also challenges the perpetrator to confession and repentance and to minister restoration and healing to those who have been exploited.”

### Climate agreement ‘missing vital sign post,’ says World Evangelical Alliance

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) has welcomed the landmark global agreement on climate change struck at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali, Indonesia on Saturday, but warned that its success may be jeopardized if world governments fail to agree to firm targets for reducing emissions by the time of the next major gathering in 2009.

A last minute compromise from the US cleared the way for agreement to be reached between the more than 180 countries gathered in Bali charged with launching negotiations on a replacement to the Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

The new deal commits the US and China to global greenhouse goals for the first time, as well as a two-year process to negotiate further emissions cuts, to culminate in the adoption of a new agreement in Copenhagen in 2009.

Andy Atkins, the WEA’s environment spokesperson and Policy Director at UK evangelical relief and development agency Tearfund, was among more than ten thousand participants at the Conference. Atkins disapproved western countries like Japan, Canada, the US and Australia for “playing hard ball” during negotiations, which slid into overtime due to the US’ opposition to Indian demands for greater leniency to be shown towards developing nations in the new deal.

While Atkins welcomed the new agreement as a sign of progress in tackling climate change on an international level, he criticized governments for rejecting a European Union proposal to bind industrialized countries to 25 – 40 percent carbon emissions cuts by 2020.

“The stalling tactics of the Bush Administration and a few others snatched mediocrity from the jaws of resounding success,” he said on Saturday.

“The good news is we have a process to negotiate further emissions cuts by 2020. Getting more than 180 countries to agree was no mean feat. But the fact that there is no agreement about exactly how far to cut emissions means the Bali roadmap is missing a vital signpost.” He added, “An ambitious, science-based target will have to be agreed by 2009 if the new agreement is not to be fatally flawed.”

Further positive news followed in the finalizing of a special Adaptation Fund, which has the potential to deliver significant funds to grassroots programs to help poor communities adapt. “It represents some progress, however at least \$50 billion a

year is needed for adaptation in developing countries, which means we will need much more than just the Adaptation Fund,” said Sarah La Trobe, Senior Policy Analyst at Tearfund. “We are pleased that adaptation has leapt up the political agenda but money is not yet flowing in the quantity we need. And world leaders must acknowledge that with every delay in taking strong action to cut global emissions, poor people in developing countries have to survive more droughts, floods and more intense storms.”

“Rich countries will have to explore every possible avenue for funding over the next few years if we are to have any chance of meeting our responsibilities to poor people.”

Atkins now asks that the WEA members would pray and act regularly about climate change. “Just as 200 years ago, many Christians spoke out about the horror and injustice of the slave trade or, more recently, the oppression of communism, this generation of Christians could play a key role in addressing the grave injustice of climate change, which hits the poorest hardest and will unfairly affect generations to come,” said Atkins and urged Christians, in the light of the Bali agreement to start new negotiations, “to get informed and use all of their influence with friends, neighbors, work colleagues, church communities and government representatives to build the public and political support which will be necessary to ensure a just and effective outcome of negotiations in 2009.”

Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe, International Director of WEA, shared his feelings on the outcome of the conference upon his return from visit to South Korea.

“We are generally encouraged by the progress made at the Bali summit achieved on addressing both the causes and effects of climate change,” he said. “However, for the sake of the poor and for the love of God’s creation, governments must be encouraged to work very hard over the next two years to establish the new global framework.”

*World Evangelical Alliance (WEA): World Evangelical Alliance is made up of 128 national evangelical alliances located in 7 regions and 104 associate member organizations. The vision of WEA is to extend the Kingdom of God by making disciples of all nations and by Christ-centered transformation within society. WEA exists to foster Christian unity, to provide an identity, voice and platform for the 420 million evangelical Christians worldwide.*

### Orthodox leaders rally to oppose Kosovo independence

Jonathan Luxmoore

Warsaw (ENI) – Serbia’s predominant Orthodox church has launched a diplomatic drive among church leaders abroad to prevent an expected UN vote to allow the independence of Kosovo from Serbia.

“By supporting this independence drive by Albanians living in Kosovo, the West forgets the hurt suffered in recent years by the Orthodox Serbs who live there,” Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexei II of Russia told Serbia’s Vecernje Novosti newspaper on December 8.

“In this spiritual cradle of Serbian Orthodoxy, 150 churches and monasteries have been destroyed or desecrated, and numerous unimaginable crimes perpetrated to eliminate the Serbs,” Alexei was quoted as saying. “I urge Western Christians to examine their consciences on Kosovo’s projected status and help rescue the region’s religious heritage.”

The patriarch, who offered to mediate in the war-torn Serbian province, in an October address to the Council of Europe, was speaking ahead of a December 19 UN Security Council debate on Kosovo self-rule, which is expected to be opposed on Serbia’s behalf by Russia.

European Union leaders have been moving towards a plan for statehood for Serbia’s breakaway province, which has not pleased Russia.

In Istanbul, the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch, Bar-

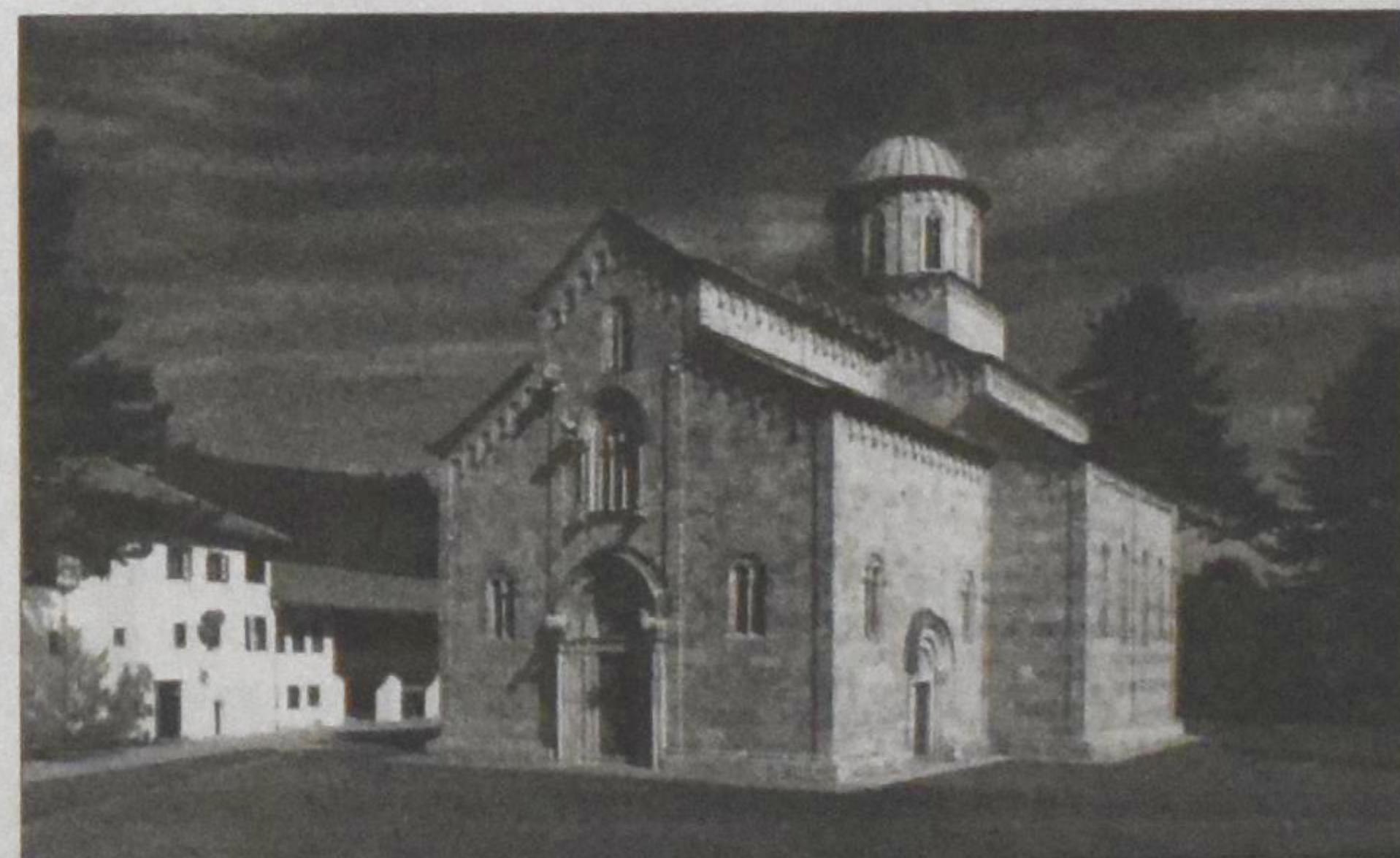
tholomeos I, told the visiting Serbian president, Boris Tadic, he would back a peaceful solution to disputes over Kosovo, from which up to 200,000 ethnic Serbs have fled since international control was imposed following NATO military action in 1999.

Leaders of Kosovo’s ethnic Albanian majority are expected to declare the province’s sovereignty after the failure of UN-backed negotiators from the US, the European Union and Russia to reach agreement on its future.

Concerns have, however, been expressed for the surviving Serbian Orthodox minority in northern Kosovo, who have been promised protection by NATO and EU forces under a “supervised independence” plan drawn up for the UN by former Finnish president, Martti Ahtisaari.

The Serbian Orthodox Church’s information service said the head of the (Orthodox) Church of Greece, Archbishop Christodoulos, had expressed concern over the province’s future during talks with Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro.

The information service referred also to the Greek archbishop’s “open discontent against the holders of political world power and their attitude towards the cradle of Serbian culture and spirituality”.



*Visoki Decani Monastery is situated in the western part of the UN administered Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohia. It was built between 1327 and 1335 by the Serbian medieval king St. Stephen of Decani and was dedicated to the Ascension of the Lord. The monastery is settled in the picturesque valley of the Bistrica river surrounded by the mountains and forests of the Prokletije mountain range. It is the largest and best preserved medieval monastery in Serbia. During its turbulent history the Monastery was an important spiritual centre with developed artistic and intellectual activities. Although the monastery buildings suffered damage from the Turkish occupation, the church has been completely preserved with beautiful 14th century fresco paintings. Today a young brotherhood of 30 brethren lives in the monastery continuing the centuries old tradition of the past. They do wood carving, icon painting, book publishing and are also active in missionary work.*



## Church

# Iraq church has 'new martyrs', says Baghdad archbishop

Stephen Brown

Geneva (ENI) – Christians are fleeing Iraq and Christianity risks disappearing from the country, says a senior Baghdad archbishop, reiterating appeals made recently to Western churches to intercede with their governments about the plight of the Iraqis.

"We do have the courage of faith, the outpouring of love, but because of the war, you see death and destruction, the manifestation of evil. Our people are lacking hope, and so they are leaving," said Archbishop Avak V. Asadourian of the Armenian Church of Iraq in an interview with ENI.

He was interviewed in Geneva on December 10 following a service at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches, at which he said the four years since the US-led invasion had been "the most difficult by far" of his 28-year ministry in Iraq. Asadourian was attending a WCC meeting centred on accompanying churches in conflict situations.

Young people "are faced each day with death and destruction, they are faced each day with being kidnapped or facing the agony of having a loved one who is kidnapped,"

the prelate told worshippers at the service.

Despite the hardships, Asadourian, who leads the Council of the Heads of the Churches in Baghdad, said the faith of the Christians in Iraq, who are estimated to account for less than three per cent of the country's 27.5 million people, has not wavered, although many reports have said their numbers have dwindled.

"On the contrary, we have been steadfast in our faith," said the archbishop. He recounted how a Syrian Orthodox priest had been decapitated in the northern Iraq city of Mosul, apparently for refusing to "adopt another religion". In the same city, a Chaldean priest and his three assistants were shot dead in June this year a few metres from their church.

"We have new martyrs in the church in Iraq," said Asadourian. "I know of no one incident in the last four years where priests have converted to another religion because they have been threatened," the archbishop stated, adding the same was true for lay people. "So in Iraq the faith of your brothers and sisters in Christ is strong enough to face martyrdom."

Nevertheless, "we are faced with the problem of the lack

of hope," the archbishop said in his sermon. "Unless the churches in Iraq can open small windows of hope then I am afraid that Christianity will face a slow demise not only in Iraq but in the entire region where Jesus Christ lived and worked," he said. "I pray that the churches in the West will be strong enough to have a say in the corridors of power to remind those in power what they promised for Iraq and that it is high time that the promise is fulfilled," the archbishop told ENI. "We ask for peace, not only for Christians, but for the entire Iraqi people, be they Muslim, Christian or adherents of other religions."

In his interview, Asadourian noted that the churches in Iraq had faced a conflict situation since 1980, with the outbreak of the war between Iran and Iraq, in which many young Christian men enlisted in the army had been killed. "After that came the Kuwait war – and what ensued after that was the 13 year long embargo, which in itself was a war," said Asadourian. "Then we had the 2003 war – and after the cessation of hostilities, we have this, the war against terrorism taking place in the entire country."

# Indians hail assurances on ending Christian Dalits' discrimination



*Dalits like this woman lose some of their equal rights when they choose to follow Christ.*

Anto Akkara

Bangalore, India (ENI) – Church groups and activists have welcomed assurances from the Indian government that discrimination will be ended against Christian Dalits that does not affect their Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh counterparts.

"The entire Christian community will be grateful if the government acts swiftly in the coming months," said the National Coordination Committee for Dalit Christians in a December 17 statement.

India's home affairs minister Shivraj Patil is reported to have told Archbishop Daniel Acharuparambil, president of the Catholic Bishops' Council of Kerala state, that the government was initiating steps to end the discrimination against Christian Dalits and others.

The Dalit Christians' national coordination committee is a forum of the mainly Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant National Council of Churches in India and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India.

Dalit (meaning "trampled upon" in Sanskrit) refers to low castes treated as untouchables under the caste system in India that enjoins them to carry out degrading and often dehumanising jobs.

Hindu Dalits were made eligible in 1950 for free education and reserved government jobs to improve their social status. Such benefits were extended to Sikh Dalits in 1956 and then to Buddhist Dalits in 1990. However, Christian Dalits who account for two thirds of some 27 million Christians in India, as well as Muslim Dalits, are denied these rights. A decade-old Christian campaign to end what has been labelled an apartheid system has not yet succeeded.

"Caste is the primary identity of all Indians. Caste has affected all peoples and all communities in India. Indian Christianity and Islam have caste discrimination within them," the Dalit Christians' committee pointed out in welcoming the federal minister's assurances.

"We hope the government will fulfil the promise this

time," the Rev. Cosmon Arokiaraj, the convenor of the ecumenical group and executive secretary of the Dalit Commission of the Catholic Church, told Ecumenical News International.

Successive Indian governments had in the past promised to end this form of discrimination against Christian Dalits, but opposition from Hindu groups was seen as making the government dither in passing the necessary constitutional amendment. Some Hindu nationalists, led by upper castes, were believed to have feared mass conversion to Christianity if the statutory rights given to Hindu Dalits were

extended to Christian Dalits.

Franklin Caesar, a Dalit Christian lawyer, whose petition challenging the "undeclared apartheid" against his group is currently being heard in the federal supreme court, said discrimination against Christian Dalits is "a constitutional fraud". More than 4 million Christian Dalits have reconverted to Hinduism, he said, as a result of Christian Dalits being denied access to free education and reserved government jobs because of their beliefs.

# Bishops urge South Africans to accept Zimbabwe refugees

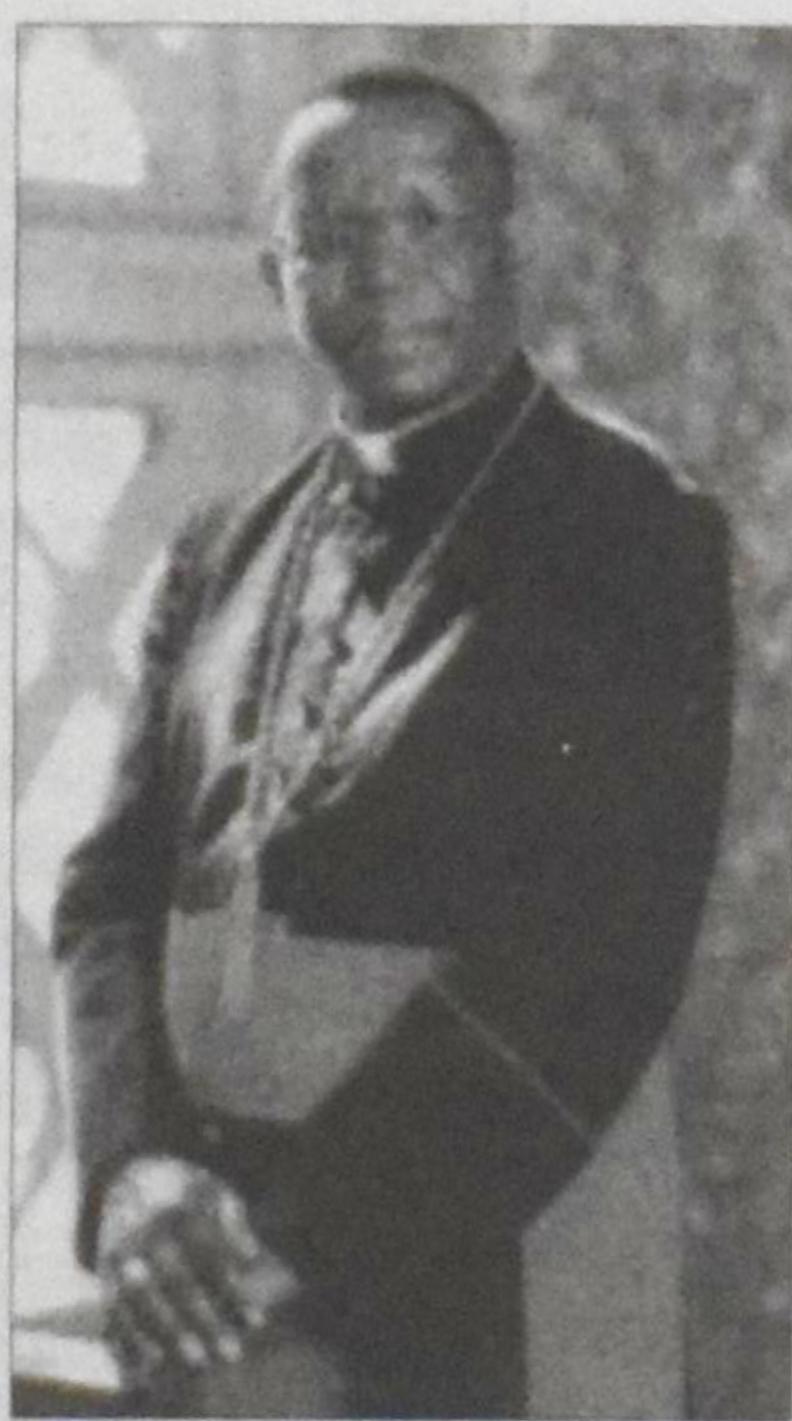
Pretoria (ENI) – Southern Africa's Roman Catholic bishops have called on South Africans to show compassion and welcome those fleeing worsening hardship in Zimbabwe into their country.

"Each of us can make a small difference to their lives by welcoming them [Zimbabweans] and assisting them to the extent our individual circumstances allow," said Archbishop Buti Tlhagale, president of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, which is based in Pretoria.

Tlhagale, who is archbishop of Johannesburg, issued a pastoral letter on December 13 on behalf of the bishops of Southern Africa to "all Catholics and people of good will concerning the treatment of Zimbabwean refugees in Southern Africa".

Recent estimates in the South African media have said there may be as many as 3 million people who have crossed into South Africa in flight from political repression and the destruction of the economy under the administration of Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe. Sometimes Zimbabweans have been targeted during xenophobic attacks in South Africa.

"In the nine months since our last statement on the situation in Zimbabwe, things in that country have not



*Archbishop Buti Tlhagale*

improved. In fact, the living conditions for people in Zimbabwe have deteriorated to the point where continued survival has become a struggle for the majority of people," said the bishops.

The bishops quoted from the Gospel according to St Matthew, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matthew 25:35)," and stated that many Zimbabweans have been forced to flee their homeland.

"They come to South Africa seeking the possibility of sustaining themselves and their families. These men, and increasingly, women and children, are refugees from the economic and political crisis in their own country," said the bishops. "Their goal, for the most part, is to preserve their lives and those of their families through access to food, medicine and work to pay for these items – and not to become South African permanent residents."

But the southern African bishops said that despite the dire circumstances in Zimbabwe, "these people are not welcomed" when they arrive in South Africa. "We complain of them taking jobs and food," the Catholic bishops stated. "We accuse them of being criminals. Our police harass them and demand bribes. We make them feel unwelcome in our churches and communities." The bishops said Zimbabweans are exploited and often paid wages well below the minimum and face being reported to the police when they complain.

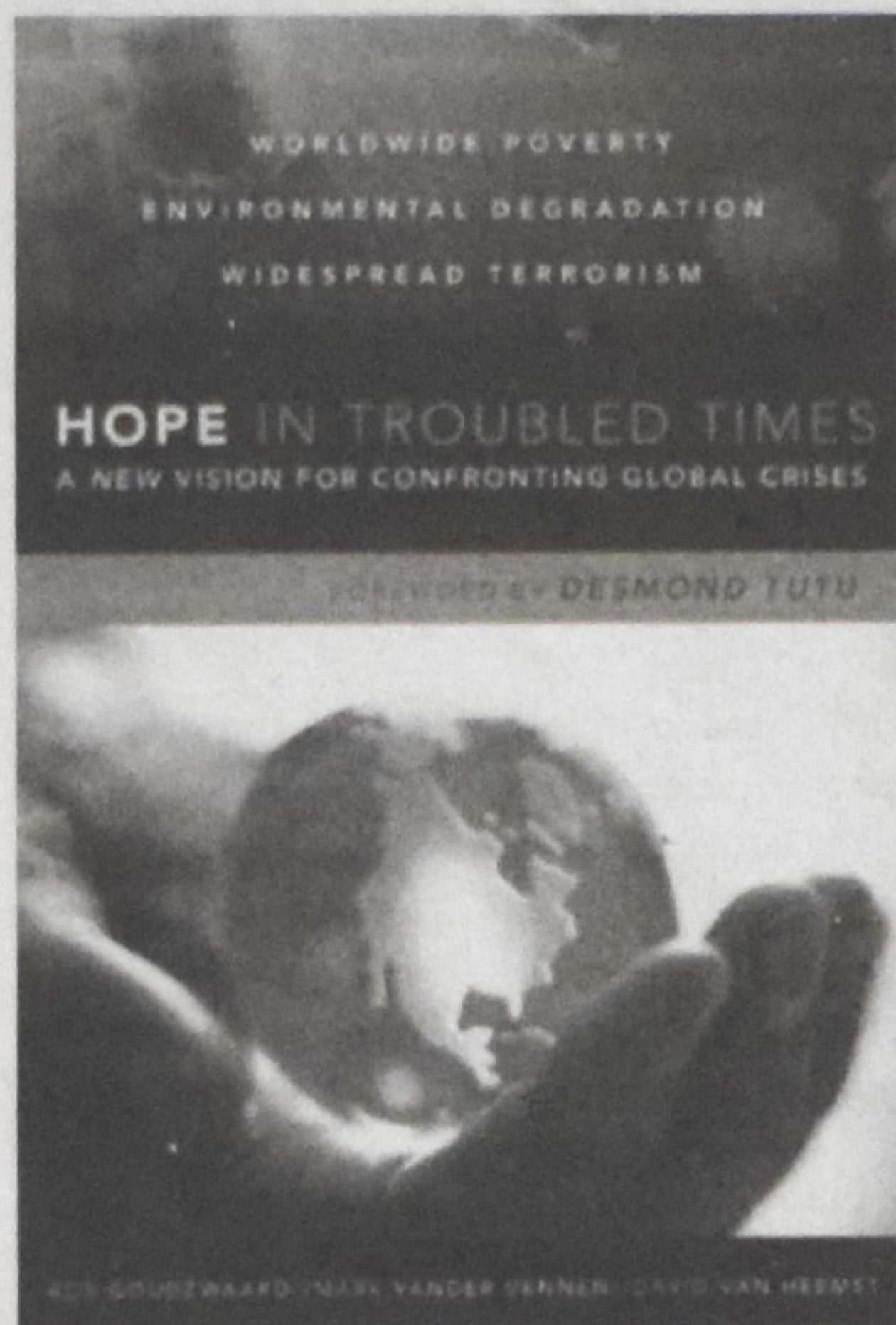
"Our response as a Church and as a nation has to be one of charity and concern," said the bishops.

A number of church leaders in Africa and other in countries, including Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, have accused African leaders of ignoring the plight of Zimbabweans in order to maintain a cosy relationship with President Mugabe.



## Review

# Nurturing Christian vision for confronting global crises



Bob Goudzwaard, Mark Vander Vennen, David Van Heemst, Foreword by Desmond Tutu, *Hope in Troubled Times: A New Vision for Confronting Global Crises*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.

## Reviewed by Dr. John Hiemstra

Concerned about violence arising from Islamist radicals? Worried about the impact of escalating environmental threats on the next generation? Feel powerless to slow the global race for more resources, possessions, and wealth? Does our obsession with guaranteeing security at home and abroad trouble you?

Or, are you more alarmed that religion is being systematically eliminated from public life and debate? Distressed that secularism sets the tone in Canada? Upset that the churches are largely silent on key issues and religion is increasingly beside the point for most people?

The good news is that you don't have to choose. Bob Goudzwaard, Mark Vander Vennen and David Van Heemst insightfully argue, in *Hope in Troubled Times*, that all world problems are integrally linked to one faith or another. In spite of the avalanche of books addressing global crises, the authors conclude that "almost every current diagnosis of the crisis of our time lacks something fundamental" namely "the roles played by people's deepest longings, dreams, and commitments" (26).

This book is a cut above most Christian studies of culture because it offers tools – actually it offers something larger, it offers an *approach* – for discerning and understanding the contesting faiths that influence the structures and patterns causing contemporary crises. The book does this while exploring in detail the problems of worldwide poverty, environmental degradation, and widespread terrorism. In so doing, this book contributes to a spiral of hope, fuelled by the gospel of Jesus, for our troubled times.

## Re-enchanting the world

You will be hard-pressed to find a recent book that so clearly, deeply and systematically explores the interrelationship of faith with contemporary crises. At the core of *Hope in Troubled Times* is a distinctive Christian understanding of ideology. It's approach stands in contrast with most popular and social science explanations of the nature and origin of ideologies, which reflect secular theories of ideology.

Over the past two centuries, Enlightenment-inspired movements promoted secularism as the best way for Western culture to avoid religious wars and intolerance. The public realm must be dis-encharmed, reserved exclusively for rational arguments which alone are capable of leading to full human happiness through material progress. Public life must be secularized; Christianity must be privatized.

Ironically, neither God nor the idols were actually banished from public life, according to *Hope in Troubled Times*. Instead of a neutral secular public realm emerging, the vacuum left by the removal of Christianity was regularly re-encharmed by other pseudo-religions. Ideologies took over and shaped life in Canada and on the global level.

I'll leave it to you to further explore the authors' biblical understanding of ideology. Suffice it to say, their view of ideology-forming and idolatry-making is itself, worth the price of the book.

## Don't be so idealistic!

I said above that "neither God nor the idols were actually banished from public life," but then only discussed ideologies and idols. What about God? The authors argue that while ideologies fill the religious vacuum of our culture, Jesus is still active in creation and history.

"Yes, that's reassuringly orthodox," you might say. "I learned that in Sunday school and it was drilled into my head in catechism too! But this always turns out to be pure confession, head-knowledge that never touches real life."

*Hope in Troubled Times* makes a brilliant point on this problem. Mainstream society labels Christians who argue that world problems ought to be addressed by acting justly, seeking mercy and pursuing creation care, as being hopelessly idealistic and other-worldly.

The hope for troubled times, the authors argue, is to recognize this is false. Being 'real,' they suggest, means recognizing the norms and values given by God as conditions for living in reality. Those who ignore these limits and plough ahead recklessly with ever-increasing economic growth, for example, are in fact otherworldly and idealistic. A society that releases increasing levels of greenhouse gases, or rigidly pursues guaranteed security, is actually idealistic! It ignores the 'reality' God made. Christians resist secular idealism because they know

creation is not endlessly malleable to our human desires. They embrace the profound realism of creation as a limited and normed gift.

Let me explain another way.

Theologians have sometimes described the Kingdom of God as the "upside down kingdom." While it is, in a certain way, the analogy is flawed. The Kingdom of God is better seen as right-side-up living in creation, while ideologies keep trying to turn the world up-side-down. Ways of life that run against the grain of creation are the ones that are really up-side-down and best seen as wild-eyed idealism. They live in self-fashioned dreams that ignore God's will and care for creation. The gospel turns the world right-side-up!

## Antithesis vs. common grace

While *Hope in Troubled Times* does not directly tackle issues such as the CRC's cultural witness – both as church and through Christian organizations – it offers a framework that can be applied fruitfully to these types of issues. As a smaller immigrant church, the CRC has engaged in heated theological debates over cultural witness and the *antithesis* (clash between good and evil) and *common grace* (God's ongoing care for all creatures). Let's briefly examine this issue.

As an early immigrant church, it was natural for the CRC to feel as an outsider, and thus harbour a strong sense of antithesis between itself and mainstream society. The Kuyperian sense of following Christ in all areas of life tended to set CRC members against others, even other Canadian Christians. This was intensified by differences of language, ethnicity and income.

Over time, however, as immigrant churches grew into nice middle class churches, differences with the Canadian mainstream began to fade on many fronts. Second and third generation CRC members assimilated their thinking, shopping, and life styles to the mainstream culture. This led some to question the religious antithesis, because they no longer felt radically at odds with the mainstream. The doctrine of common grace began to dominate the antithesis in their minds, and members increasingly joined mainstream political parties, cultural organizations, and economic institutions, as though they were simply neutral and rational.

The framework offered by *Hope in Troubled Times* suggests Christians don't have to, nor should they, choose between antithesis and common grace. Instead the book offers a way of seeing the antithesis between the gospel and ideologies concretely unfold within common, everyday cultural reality. All humanity is busy puzzling over the problems of worldwide poverty, environmental degradation, and widespread terrorism. This reality itself calls us to recognize that deep down there is often a collision or antithesis between gospel renewal in Jesus and ideo-

logical approaches is occurring. Common grace and antithesis are integrally united in Christ.

## Religious syncretism and ideology

*Hope in Troubled Times* also contributes a broader and deeper understanding of syncretism, or "the combination or reconciliation of differing beliefs or practices in religion, philosophy" (*Webster's Dictionary*, 120). Too often, Christians spiritualize the problem of syncretism, restricting it to the combination of Christian beliefs with other world religions, i.e. Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism. The authors identify a broader, more cutting view of syncretism, namely, combining Christian beliefs with those of one or more ideologies! While 75 percent of Canadians call themselves Christian, for example, these convictions are married to another motivating 'religion' that actually drives much of our economic and political life (120).

"So what?" you might ask.

Once we recognize this expanded definition of syncretism, it becomes harder to politically fall in line with the ideological right, middle or left. Christians should be uncomfortable easily jumping on the band wagons of conservative, social democratic, or middling liberal political parties.

On the economic front, a clear understanding of syncretism should make us think twice about focusing too much time on building up wealth, participating in consumerism, or buying the latest fashions, electronic gizmos, houses or cars. Awareness of ideological syncretism in economics could, the authors suggest, help us recover its original meaning as "primarily taking care of people and nature" (236).

## From powerlessness to practical steps

*Hope in Troubled Times* emphasizes re-igniting biblical hope that leads to action. It seeks to avoid the shallowness of humanistic activism, the paralysis of powerlessness, the irrelevance of quietistic surrender and the dead end of spiritual escapism. It inspires us to reflect on practical and doable steps. Readers are left too much to their own devices, however, as the book does not offer many actual steps.

This flaw is overcome, to large degree, by the authors' profound and groundbreaking understanding of practical action steps! They reject the pragmatist notion of solving problems through incremental policy adjustments to economic, social, or environmental practices. Instead, they introduce the idea of re-orienting steps, practical actions that re-direct the religious thrust of our culture, defuse the spirals driving us to collapse, and open up space to accept the healing presence of the Spirit of God in renewing our lives.

To whet your appetite, the book offers the following guidelines for shaping action strategies for local and global problems:

See *Christian Vision*, page 15



## Life challenges

### Little things

This time of year I like to flip through the pages of my journals from the last twelve months. Sometimes it's in reading about the past that patterns emerge and I learn things in hindsight.

A year ago at this time I couldn't lift my right arm high enough to properly brush my hair. I couldn't tie an apron behind my back, or reach over my head to swim a stroke. I had painted a couple of ceilings in the fall and little by little, the muscles in my right shoulder tensed up in the weeks that followed. Every day I hoped that the pain would diminish and/or disappear, but instead it got worse. I finally went to the doctor.

X-rays and an ultrasound revealed mild bursitis, not enough to cause that much pain, so the diagnosis was frozen shoulder. I was told to take anti-inflammatory medication and painkillers, and to use an ice-pack several times a day. The ibuprofen and Tylenol soon took their toll, so I relied on the ice-pack and learned to put up with the discomfort. Friends suggested herbal remedies and massage therapy, which brought limited relief. By spring the pain had increased and I often lay awake at night. The doctor gave me a cortisone injection and referred me for physiotherapy.

Six weeks later the physiotherapist was able to see me for the first time. She examined my shoulder, explained the problem and told me we would be seeing a lot of each other for a few months. She predicted a lengthy process, but felt sure I could re-

gain full use of my right arm. She showed me my first exercise, told me to do it five or six times a day and booked our next appointment.

I came home and retrieved my mother's cane from the basement to use it for the prescribed exercise. The technique wasn't strenuous and I wondered if it would actually do any good. But I had nothing to lose. I did exactly as instructed. When I returned to the hospital a few days later the therapist encouraged me. She manipulated my arm and said that she could already see progress, then showed me a few more exercises.

After two weeks I had a routine of a half dozen different stretches to be done several times a day. None of them were difficult. The hardest part was taking frequent ten minute intervals to go through the routine, and hoping no one would walk in while I was sprawled on the floor making "snow angels." I began to see the improvements myself and was eager to show the therapist what I could do each week. One month later she congratulated me and discharged me from therapy. In far less time than either of us had imagined, the full range of motion had been restored to my arm. The ice-pack is still in the freezer, just in case. But I've had no need of it or painkillers since.

The whole episode makes me realize how being faithful in little things can add up to great accomplishments. All I did was follow instructions. I trusted the therapist's expertise. She couldn't do the exercises for me,

but she did know what needed to be done. All those tiny movements, as insignificant as they seemed individually, when repeated diligently day after day, strengthened the weakened areas and stretched the shrink-wrapped tissues in my shoulder. Come to think of it, the repetitive movements of painting ceilings did the damage in the first place. Apparently little things can work for good or ill.

So here I stand at the threshold of a brand new year. With my abysmal track record of broken New Year's resolutions, I should really give up the practice. Still, I can't look at this clean slate ahead of me without longing to do better. I wonder what little, repetitive habits have I allowed that are effectively hindering my growth as a Christian? Again, from reading my journal I would have to say the big issue for me is anxiety.

I don't obsess deliberately, but it's a natural tendency. From family matters to finances, I can always find something to fret over. I'm so good at it that often I don't even realize I'm doing it. Worry has a couple of deep roots. One is the mistaken idea that through my own efforts I can control life. I should know better by now. The other (and I hate to admit this) is a lack of faith in the God who actually does control all of life. Unchecked, those niggling little doubts can bloom into spiritual depression – a crippling condition for any believer.

What's to be done? To break a lifelong pattern seems an impossible task. And it's

not going to disappear on its own. I've been reading a collection of excellent sermons on the topic by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. They all point me back to the Bible. It remains an ongoing struggle, but the only failure would be to give up trying. Meanwhile, I'm hoping that small, faithful steps in a healthy direction will alter some of my learned behaviours. If I can focus more on God and less on myself, there should be a whole lot less stress in my life. That's the theory anyway.

One of my friends chooses a "theme verse" from the Bible every year. She selects a very short passage, then memorizes it, meditates on it, studies its context and applies it to her everyday experiences all year long. It's a simple idea. What have I got to lose?

For 2008 I think I'll choose Philippians 4:6 & 7: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Hmm...sounds like I've made another New Year's resolution, doesn't it? Well, I'm not going to worry about it.

Happy New Year!

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rington, Ont. Her email:  
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## Consumption quiz is a real eye opener

*Everybody wants what they don't have  
Just a little bit more wouldn't be so bad  
It's a funny little thing, it's kind of sad  
I've squandered everything I've had.*

Sevenglory, Christian band

Over the past few years I've developed a special interest in environmental issues and attended a number of related lectures and workshops. One of the concepts repeatedly mentioned is the ecological footprint, a measure of the amount of biologically productive land and sea area needed to produce the resources we use and absorb the wastes we produce. Calculators have been developed for various groups, including individuals and families, school children and business owners. This week I went online to one of them, at [www.myfootprint.org](http://www.myfootprint.org), to gauge the sustainability of my family's lifestyle.

The Ecological Footprint Quiz begins with demographic information such as the number of people in your household and the population of the city or town where you live. This is followed by sixteen questions addressing four areas: food, goods, shelter and mobility. Your total footprint is then calculated in square hectares. Summaries for each of the four categories are also included, so you can see where you rate highest. There

are links to action pages that list simple but effective ways to decrease your footprint.

The average ecological footprint in Canada is 8.8 global hectares per person; our family came in at 6.5. While that's better than average, it's nothing to boast about, given this statistic that accompanied the results: "worldwide, there exist (only) 1.8 biologically productive global hectares per person." In other words, if everyone lived like our family, 3.6 planets would be needed. Yikes!

Our footprint is highest in the area of food consumption. Ideas for reducing it include creating a vegetable garden (a great family project), eating more meatless meals, cooking from scratch more often, planning more meals around foods that are in season, eating organic foods and choosing more foods that are locally grown and produced. The latter can be accomplished by frequenting farmers markets or visiting a farm to pick your own produce, which can be a fun and educational family activity.

Favourite fruits and vegetables can be enjoyed out of season by freezing, dehydrating or canning them. Who knows, making preserves together could become a wonderful family tradition.

As for organic food, purchasing an annual share of the produce from an area farm – part of a practice known as community-supported agriculture – is an increasingly popular option.

It didn't really surprise me to learn our footprint is lowest in the mobility category. Our home is within walking distance of numerous amenities, including a bus depot, medical centre and shopping mall. And neither my husband nor I have a lengthy commute to work. Both of our vehicles are second-hand and, as usual, will be driven until they're ready for the scrap yard. We use the smaller one as much as possible, consolidate trips and refrain from idling, which includes avoiding drive-through services.

Our efforts to date in other areas include replacing the incandescent light bulbs in our house with compact fluorescent bulbs; installing a backyard clothesline; eliminating the use of pesticides; sharing, borrowing or renting infrequently-needed equipment rather than buying it; and reducing our water consumption through various means.

In addition to altering our patterns of food consumption, we plan to work at using our own shopping bags more often, avoiding items with heavy (if any) packaging, buying second-hand more frequently, buying less

stuff, and just generally living more simply, consuming less and generating less waste.

While each step we take to reduce our ecological footprint may seem small-scale, our actions can, in fact, make a difference, especially when combined with the efforts of others.

Not only does living lightly help ensure the viability of our planet, it also helps us to focus on what's really important – the things money can't buy – and to live in peace and joy with all of God's creation.

Here are some web sites to check out: Earth Day Network, [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net), a sponsor of the Ecological Footprint Quiz.

David Suzuki Foundation, [www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org) – Join the Nature Challenge.

Canadian Organic Growers, [www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca) – Download the Niagara Organic Growers Directory published by the Niagara Chapter.

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writer.





## Memoirs

# Working for the underground (Part 3)

**Pieter Strayer**

Rommel and Montgomery were still fighting. First one side would win a battle and then the other. At last Rommel was defeated and the Allies landed in Italy. Meanwhile, Germany had invaded Russia and was sending many troops to the Russian front. Soldiers in the German army who were not on their toes were told to shape up or else they would be sent to the Russian front. They were afraid of being sent to Russia because thousands and thousands of German soldiers died there.

In December America entered the war. They had been helping the English by sending ships loaded with supplies and by sending hundreds of planes to England. We could see that the number of planes flying to Germany on bombing raids was increasing, while the number of German planes was decreasing. In fact, toward the end, the German planes weren't going up at all anymore.

The Germans were hiding ammunition and supplies on the Island. One day we had to go to Brouwershaven to unload a boat full of ammunition. A column of farm wagons were also waiting, for the boat had to be unloaded as quickly as possible and the ammunition stored in the dunes near Haamstede.

We were standing outside a building when we overheard that the boat had run aground on a sandbar. The tide was just going out, so it would be six hours before the tide came in again and the boat could be freed.

This was our chance. We hurried back to Zierikzee and passed along the information to the Allies. We told them that a boat carrying ammunition was stuck in a certain location and asked that an available plane bomb it.

The next night we wanted to know how things went, so we approached one of the Germans and asked him if we were still needed. "No," he said, "we don't need your truck anymore. The boat isn't coming."

**Friends and enemies**

Such things were about the best the underground could do. Keep your eyes open

*Sand dunes by Haamstede*

and count the days, they said. It was very dangerous to say anything. You had to be very careful what you said to your family or friends; you couldn't tell them anything. Someone once said to me, "Your friends are your biggest enemy. The Germans come third. Your friends and your family are first and second, and if you let your family know what you are doing, you are placing them in danger. If the Germans pick them up, they will be forced to talk. Your family and friends might be proud that they know something others don't, so be careful what you say to them."

It was best to say as little as possible about what you were doing. Only my sister Grietje became suspicious when she found a revolver under my pillow and she occasionally acted as courier between myself and the Armenians. Later I became aware that several other people knew I was involved in the underground.

One of my bosses, Mulokhouwer was his name, knew that we would often take the truck to Zierikzee, so he knew something was going on, and he belonged to the N.S.B. [Nazi sympathizers], but he was a good man. He had been an officer in the Dutch army and had fought the Germans until his ma-

chine gun was red hot. He was a National Socialist, but he was against the Germans, and he let them know it too.

He had a pretty good idea what we were doing, not that he ever said, "I approve of what you're doing." But he pretended that he knew nothing. He did warn us sometimes, though. Once he made me promise not to take the truck out that night. "Piet," he said, "if you go out tonight, they'll pick you up. Promise me that you'll stay home tonight." And I did.

The night before, we had picked up some boxes of ammunition, boxes of hand grenades, shells, bullets and such. We had been spotted by some German soldiers biking in the opposite direction. It was night and we were driving without lights as we passed by them. They must have reported to headquarters that they had seen a truck, so we were under suspicion. Had we gone out that night, we would have been caught.

The mayor of our town also was a member of the N.S.B. He was a rich farmer, and my grandfather, my mother, and my brother had worked for his father. According to a book that he wrote after the war, he also knew what the underground was doing. He was always good to our family.

When the last of the men of Haamstede between the ages of 17 and 45 were being rounded up to work in Germany, I also packed my suitcases and got ready to go. I didn't see any way of getting out of it. But the mayor went to the Germans and said, "He's the only one around here still driving a truck; if you take him, you lose your only driver."

"One of the older men can drive," they replied.

Earlier the mayor had told my mother: "Mina, tell your son, Gilles, that he can stay home. I know he's 17, but I've altered the records so that he's listed as 16."

But Gilles said, "I'm 17 and I've got to go."

"No, you don't," said my mother. "Piet has to go, but you can stay home."

But Gilles insisted that he was going, and when all the men lined up in front of the church to leave, he lined up too.

I said, "Gilles, please go home!"

But he didn't listen. I was excused, because the mayor had convinced the Germans to let me stay, but my younger brother went off to work in Germany.

"If you're going to be so stubborn, then go!" I said. "Here, take my suitcases." I guess he was hungry for adventure.

**Subverting the German defences**

Things became very busy for me, so I was glad I had been able to stay. All sorts of news and information had to be passed around. Planes were flying over all the time and the Germans were busy preparing defenses against an Allied invasion.

Once somebody brought me a crate full of fuses for anti-tank mines that were destined for France. We hid them well. The Germans looked high and low for them, but never found them.

After D-Day, June 6, 1944, when the Allies landed on the French coast, the Germans became more and more vicious. It didn't take much for them to kill you. The Germans were on the lookout for underground activity and the old-timers in the underground were being very careful.

One of them told me, "I can get a job at the airfield."

"Take it," I urged him. "Then you can find out what's happening."

But he was afraid. One of the Germans had eyed him suspiciously, he said.

"They can't tell that you belong to the underground just by looking at you," I told him.

You can to be careful too. Take my friend Rademaker, for instance: once he was warned to go into hiding because the police were at his door. His mother owned a small cafe and people had seen a police car stop in front and assumed they had come to pick him up.

"I'll go home and see what they want," he said.

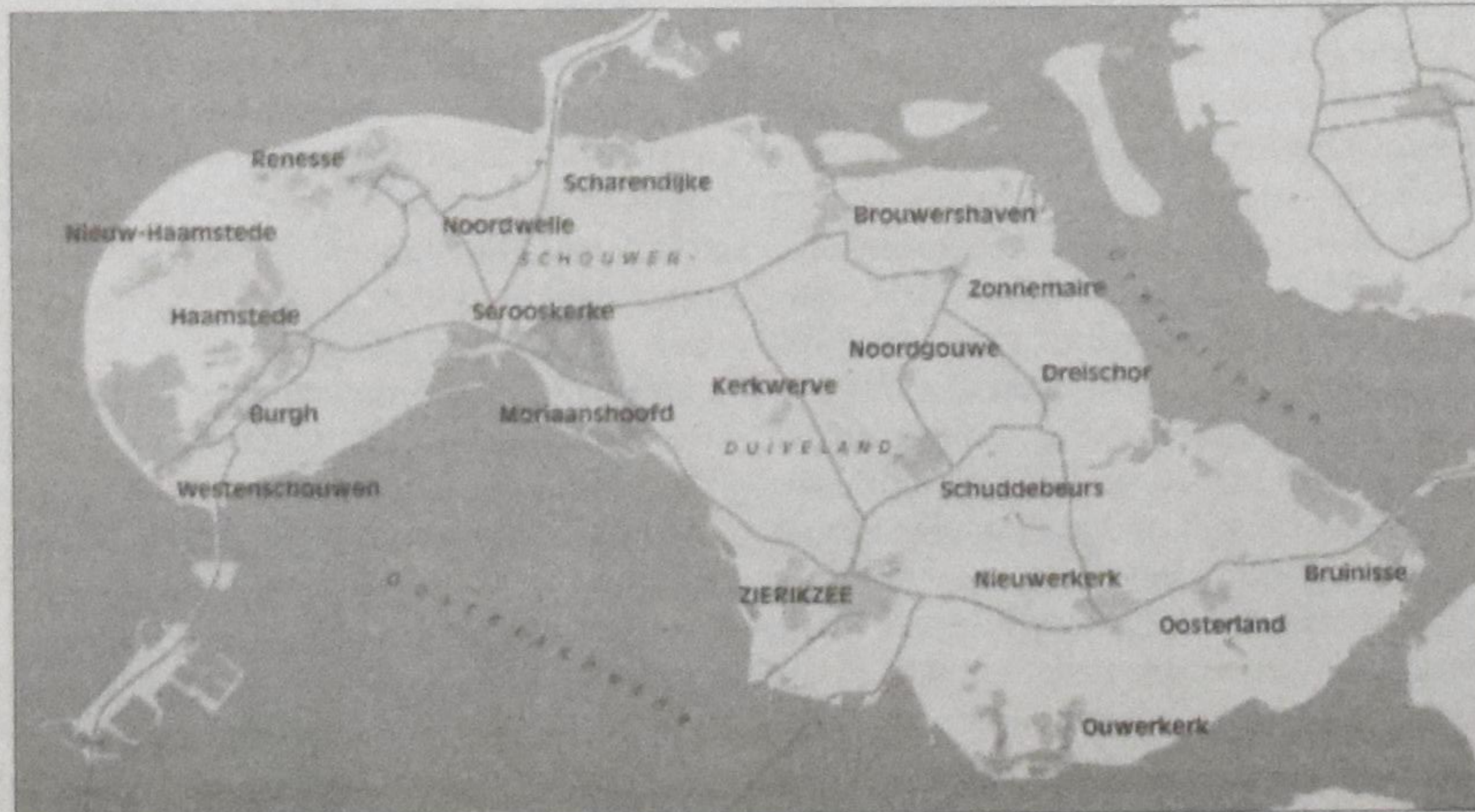
"No, you'd better go into hiding."

"Not me, first I want to see what's going on."

It turned out that the officers were planning a party and they were looking for a few bottles of liquor. Now and then the cafes still received a few bottles of liquor. His mother promised them that as soon as she received any she would let them know. And the Germans left happy.

If my friend had fled and gone into hiding, there would have been trouble. So you could be too careful. You had to be bold at times.

Once Rademaker and I and two others were leaving the office when we ran into a German officer who was searching for bicycles that had not been turned in. Some people had dismantled their bikes and hidden them in their attics or elsewhere, so the





## Memoirs



Germans were going from house to house.

"It looks like they've been confiscating bikes again in Haamstede," said Jaap Rademaker. "They must have found mine too."

The German stopped at the bakery and parked his bike by the door. As we walked past, Jaap grabbed the bike and walked away with it.

"You aren't going to steal that bike, are you?" Asked the other two.

"Why not?" He said. "They stole mine. Now we're even."

He was lucky that the German didn't come back out of the bakery right away, of course. Then he would have been arrested. When we got to the next corner, he hopped on the stolen bike and headed for home. When he got home, he discovered that they had not found his bike, so now he had two of them.

"I'm not taking it back, though," he said. "They'll think I stole it."

### Dangers from both sides

The underground suggested that the munition dump at Haamstede be bombed. When I saw my contact in Zierikzee, I told him I would deliver a map. I had to work out the details using a compass. You had to find a landmark that the pilot could spot easily, and I chose the Witte Castle. From the air, however, a pilot could not always tell the difference between the tower of a castle and a church steeple. The munition dump was about one hundred meters north of the castle tower. First came the church steeple, then the castle, and one hundred meters beyond the munition dump.

But the Allied fighters struck before I could deliver my map. They came from the north instead of from the south and were aiming their strike one hundred meters in the other direction – in the middle of town. I happened to be in town that day and took shelter behind a huge cement pillar. A huge

chunk was blown out of it by one of the rockets fired by the fighters, and the church steeple of Burgh was also destroyed. They must have thought it was a lookout post.

Half the town was destroyed and seventeen people killed. I brought some of the wounded to the hospital, which was not an easy trip. The road was under water; at low tide you could see the road, but the salt water had wrecked the pavement so that it was full of holes.

The next day, I went back to Zierikzee, and asked, "What happened? They got the directions reversed." Someone else, it turned out, had delivered bad instructions that had been passed on to the Allies.

Meanwhile, I was still hauling food for the German soldiers, but only at night, for during the day Allied planes shot at any trucks that moved. The only light you had came through a narrow slit left open in the headlights.

At last the Allies also landed in Walcheren, but the Germans had flooded the whole area, so that the only place they could land was on a narrow dike near Vlissingen and Domburg. I heard that as many as ten thousand Allied soldiers were killed in the landing. I don't know if that was true, but it did cost many lives.

Soon wounded Germans began arriving in Zierikzee. From there I had to bring them to the hospital in Noordgouwe across the flooded roads. Some of the soldiers were on stretchers and the rest had bandaged heads and limbs. It was a rough ride so they complained loudly.

"Sorry boys," I said, "but it's not our fault. We didn't flood the roads; you people did. So if you have any complaints, send

them to Berlin."

We couldn't say too much, but we were secretly delighted, because they were proof that the Allies were doing something.

Once, on the way back from the hospital while we were traveling along the flooded dike, we were attacked by a fighter. Jaap Rademaker was sitting in the back feeding wood to the generator, for we hadn't been able to get gasoline for some time. So we had converted the truck to run on wood. We didn't see the fighters until they started shooting. The bullets glanced off the steel cooker and one of them took a button off Jaap's coat. It shot off his pocket and sent his wallet and his money flying all over the dike.

I stopped, and Jaap and I and two German soldiers took cover behind a stone wall. The Germans started shooting back.

"Hold it!" we shouted. "If you want to shoot back, go someplace else. You may be safe behind this wall, if they come from that way, but if they come from the other way, this wall won't do you any good."

"Leave the money and let's go," said Jaap.

"Better pick it up," I said. "You may need it. We gathered up his money and his papers and got home safely."

We heard that several Armenians had been locked up by the Germans. The Germans had become aware that they could not be trusted and they were afraid that in the event of an Allied invasion the Armenians might go over to the other side. They had found out that the Armenians were spying for the Allies.

An Armenian boy served as valet for the Hauptman, the commander, shining his

shoes and doing all sorts of chores for him. The Hauptman liked the boy, but it came out that the boy was passing information to the underground. He had stolen some papers and was caught. The boy was condemned to death, but the Hauptman refused to hand him over to a firing squad. He was a good man, better than most of the German officers. He walked the boy into the woods near Witte Castle and shot him himself. He wept just as bitterly as the boy.

### In the dunes

We were not allowed to go into the dunes; that was off-limits, and you would be treated as a spy if you were caught there. But one night we went into the dunes about 2 a.m., searching for seagull eggs. It turned out that the area was flooded with German soldiers, because they were holding manouvers there, driving make-believe invaders back into the sea.

Instead of Allies, they caught us gathering seagull eggs. They set us down in the sand. "We'll have to report this to the Hauptman; he'll decide your punishment," they said. "Didn't you know that this was off-limits?" asked the Hauptman.

"Sure, but we were gathering seagull eggs."

"Yeah, I know," he said. "It's hard to find enough to eat." He seemed to understand.

"I'm afraid you won't find any more than you already have. The soldiers came from the other way and they have picked up whatever eggs there were."

We could have been shot for being there, but the man let us go. We were thankful we got off so lightly.

Another time a friend of mine was caught in the dunes all by himself. He ran into a German soldier with a shotgun who was hunting rabbits for food. He was captured to be taken to the Hauptman, because he had no papers on him. At least we had papers to show that we worked at the airfield, but he had nothing.

It was a wild area, full of brush and briars. He pointed to some bushes, and said to the soldier, "I'll go in from the other side and flush out the rabbits, and you can shoot them from here."

"Good idea," said the German.

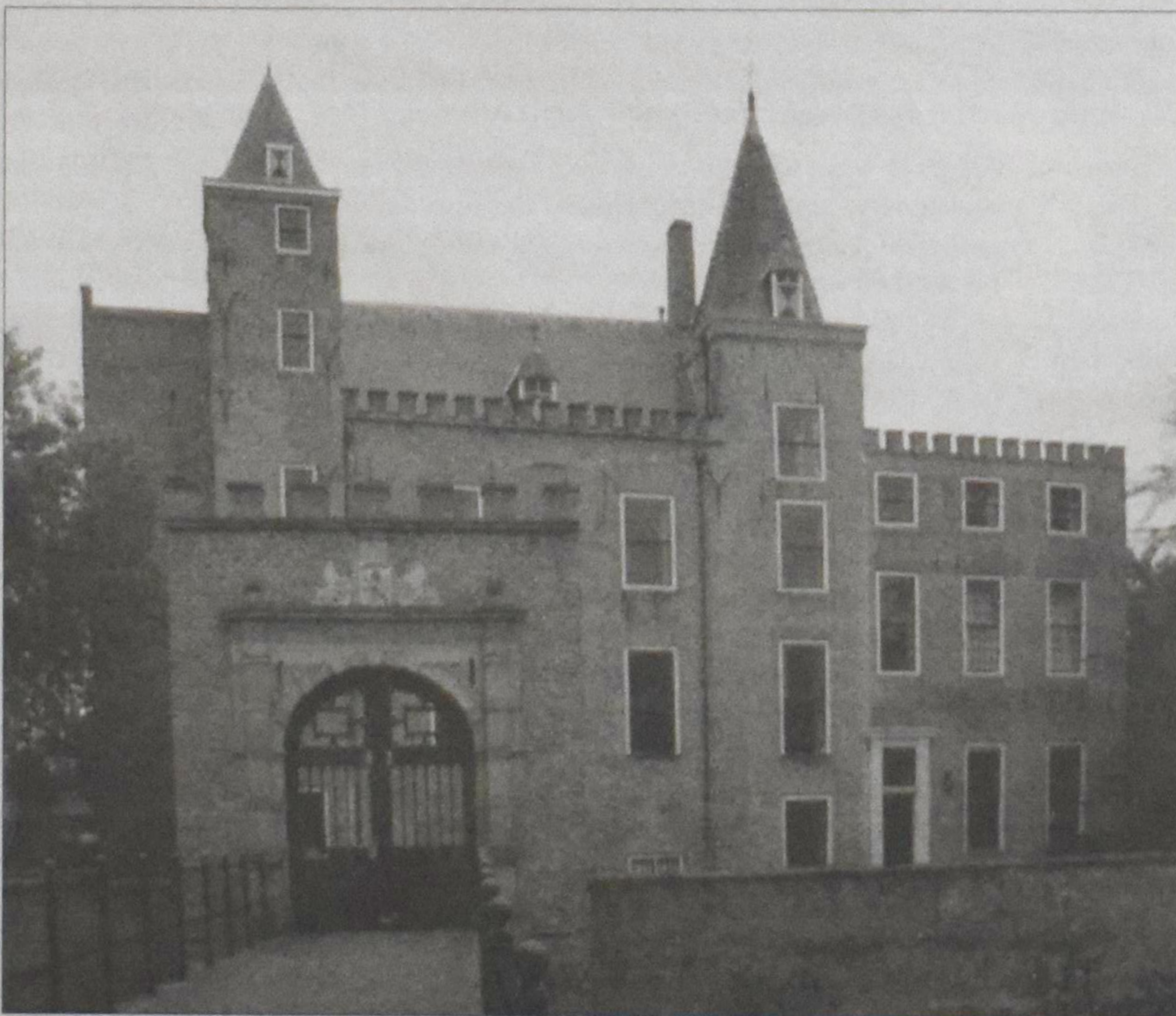
So my friend went into the bushes, shouting and making a racket. Sure enough, first one rabbit popped out, and then another. The German fired, and missed, fired again, and hit the second one.

"That's two shots," thought my friend. "Now you have to reload, and by that time I'll be out of range." And he raced off in the other direction.

We all had our stories.

When the English landed on St. Philipsland, the underground knew of it before the Germans. The Allies wanted maps of all

*Continued on page 15*



*Witte castle also known as the slot in Haamstede*



## Corinthians

## The supplement to the fundamental tradition

...and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

1 Cor. 15:8 - 10.

## A. A. van Ruler

In these verses the Apostle Paul briefly describes the content of the tradition in which he stands together with the believing, confessing church. It is the death of Jesus for our sins and his resurrection on the third day. And further, it includes the list of witnesses who – officially, as it were – have seen the risen Lord with their own eyes. This is the tradition that constitutes the historical foundation of the church.

It is remarkable, however, how Paul crosses the boundaries of this fundamental tradition in this text and simply adds a new fact. He says the risen Lord appeared to me too, albeit much later and long after his ascension. And this is the same thing as his appearance to the others. Therefore, I too belong with the witnesses to his resurrection, and therefore I am also an apostle and part of the tradition that is the foundation of the church.

This supplement or addition is even more remarkable and goes much deeper than appears at first reading. Paul is speaking here of nothing less than God's freedom by which he includes Paul in the number of the apostles. According to human notions of the office of apostle, this would be impossible. Paul was never in the company of Jesus. He did not eat and drink with him. He didn't walk the roads of Palestine with him. Unlike the other apostles he was never among his disciples. This supplement confused the twelve. This was a shame; however, the number twelve had a deep meaning. It pointed to the twelve tribes of Israel. The twelve apostles clearly indicated that in and through them the new – that is, the renewed – people of God were being called into existence through their confession of Jesus as the Messiah. This beautiful symbolism is fractured by the addition of a thirteenth apostle.

We must always take this playful freedom of God into account. He acts in an orderly way in history, in tradition and through institutions and authorities. But he is the living God. He doesn't hesitate to repeatedly break through the boundaries he has set himself to do his work in unexpected ways, ways that we cannot anticipate.

We see this again and again. Salvation, the sure covenant of grace is through the church, through its preaching, sacraments and offices, but miracles of healing and many gifts often happen outside the church.

Paul himself, however, is thinking about a completely different freedom of God. He says, the last person to whom Jesus appeared, thus the last post in the tradition, is me. He calls himself the one born "abnormally" or untimely into the apostolic family. By this he



Harmensz van Rijn Rembrandt "The Apostle Paul in Prison", 1627, oil on panel.

seems to want to point to his own immaturity and unworthiness, his own unsightliness and impossibility. He is the black sheep, the scandal of the family, for he once persecuted the people of God.

At this time the other apostles had long been God's fellowship. Paul persecuted them with all the fury of his huge, passionate soul. For the rest of his life Paul keeps reflecting on the fact that he had done such a thing as persecute the church of God. The church is the jewel that God has placed in the world. It is the apple of God's eye. It is the fellowship of those whom God knows and who know him. They know and will everything that God has in store for this world. God himself is present in this fellowship. He lives and rests there. He lives on the praises of Israel.

This is the church that Paul – inexplicably blinded – persecuted. As part of the people of Israel, he should have seen that this was the church of God because it confessed Jesus whom God appointed to be the Messiah. But he failed to see it.

Paul never stopped thinking about this. It remained an open, aching wound in his soul. He talks openly about it. We must say that he does so with joy because of

the grace of God which covered it. This is what Paul calls the frankness of faith and of love. Nevertheless, it remains an unfathomable and painful riddle to him. So much so that he says that therefore he is the least, the slightest of all apostles.

Actually, he lets slip, I'm not really an apostle. At least not worthy, not fit to be called an apostle. He does not say I wasn't an apostle. He says I am not an apostle. The fact that he is an apostle is and remains an incomprehensible reality. It is by God's grace. He is what he is by the grace of God. So he is an apostle nevertheless.

This is so, we might say, by the unfathomable and free power of God. The tradition had long been closed. The number of apostles was full. The appearances of the risen Christ had ended. And yet there came one more unique appearance – to him, who was blazing hatred and murder. And he was simply taken up into the circle of Jesus' apostles whether or not he wanted it, whether or not the other apostles agreed. By it the founding tradition of the church experienced a tremendous expansion.

This simply happened as a matter of fact, says Paul. And it was not a meaningless event. On the contrary, it added a great deal, for Paul, the least of the apostles, did more than all the others put together.

He made a greater effort and displayed greater passion to serve, traveled greater distances, and formed more congregations. About this Paul also talks openly and frankly. But not out of Pharisaic pride. But for God's sake boasting and preening to show forth the things of Jesus Christ.

It is the grace of God at work. It is a power that fills the time and makes history. A humble child of humanity is simply taken up into that work and used to accomplish great things. There is nothing more wonderful than swimming on the waves of the sea, being carried on the ocean's depths. This is how it is with the grace of God. It carries and supports a person.

Who is it then that does these things – God or man? Of course it is God, and God alone, God himself who does everything. But it has the gestalt, the form of a full-blooded human existence consumed in an sacrifice of love.



## Farming

### Resistance...continued from page 13

the defenses, weapons, minefields and such on Schouwen, but only the commander had all the maps. There were others who had bits and pieces of the whole, but the only way to get a complete view was to steal them from the commander.

Before the Germans even knew that the Allies were on St. Philipsland, the documents had been stolen. I came home to find Soeren sitting on the stairway in the dark with the papers. I delivered them to a contact in Zierikzee. Then two workers from the electric department said they had to check the lines. They crossed at Zijpe and met some Englishmen dressed in civilian clothes and passed on the maps to them. They returned before the Germans found the papers missing.

#### Torpedo boats

We heard that German torpedo boats were using Burghsluis as a station from which to attack Allied shipping. They were one-man boats on top of a torpedo. The pilot would aim at an Allied boat, release his torpedo and then try to get clear. They could get close and it was very accurate and could do a lot of damage. It was a little like the Japanese kamikazes because these crafts usually didn't have enough gas left to reach safety. So to pilot one was suicidal.

The area that they kept these crafts was top secret and strictly off-limits, but I thought, "I'd sure like to take a look around there!"

One day I spotted a German soldier walking along the road in the direction of Burghsluis. I stopped and asked, "Where are you headed?"

"To Burghsluis."

"Hop in. I'll give you a ride." He tossed his stuff in the truck and climbed in.

The first check-point was a half kilometer from the harbour. The barrier was closed and the road was blocked by barbed wire. No soldiers stood on guard there, however, because all the civilians had been evacuated.

"You're a German soldier," I said to my passenger. "You can open the gate. Then I can drive you the rest of the way."

He opened the barrier and I drove on. I was just entering the drive to the harbour when a German guard came dashing out and stopped me. He shouted and ranted at me and ordered me to back up immediately.

"I was only bringing this soldier here," I said.

He checked the soldier's papers and the man had come to the wrong place. After I had dropped off the German soldier elsewhere, I asked one of the Armenians to look into what was happening in the harbour.

"There are about twenty-four of those torpedo boats docked there," he said. "The plan is to strike Allied ships when there are a number of them unloading ammunition and war materials in Antwerp and to blow them all sky-high."

I passed this information on, but I warned Allies not to bomb the other side of the dike because the houses were inhabited by civilians. That wasn't true. But I had been born there, and I didn't want to see all those homes destroyed.

One morning I was ordered to report to the border police at Burghsluis. They were being transferred to Scharendijk and I was supposed to move them. The job of the border police was to keep strangers away. I was not permitted on the dike itself, but while we were loading the truck, twelve fighters suddenly attacked the harbour. All that was between us and the harbour was the dike, so we could have been easily hit.

I ran away from the truck into the fields. The fighters made one run, then turned around and made another, dropping their bomb each time. When they were done, another twelve fighters appeared and did the same thing. One of the Armenians had climbed up on the dike and lay on his belly watching the whole thing.

Afterward, when we were loading the truck again, he told me, "There was one torpedo boat that they kept missing, but it was hit by the very last bomb and exploded. They've all been destroyed – all twenty-four of them."

So after I had dropped off my load, I went to Zierikzee to report that the mission had been a complete success.

*Note: This is a continuing series. Part 1 and 2 are in the Nov. 19th and Dec. 3rd issues. To request previous articles, email ads@christiancourier.ca or phone 905-937-3314.*

### Raw milk debate started in 1889 – still going strong

Politics and religion are topics that can get you into arguments and debates.

There are other topics that some people fiercely defend. Sometimes I get into arguments with these staunch supporters.

Two topics you can add to politics and religion are: Raw milk and Stomping Tom Connors.

I find many of Stomping Tom's songs annoying. They're twangy. His singing is awful. Bud the Spud is probably his best song. But he's got lots of fans in Canada and especially in the Ottawa Valley. They love the guy. You have to be careful what you say about him and his songs.

That brings me to raw milk – unpasteurized fatty milk. I was raised on low-fat home pasteurized milk. My mother always let a container of raw milk sit overnight in the refrigerator and then skimmed the cream off in the morning. Some of the cream was used for coffee; the rest put back into the tank. The milk was boiled in a double boiler.

We drank lots of milk and buttermilk and it was always home-pasteurized. We never drank raw milk. All the farm families we knew drank raw milk. Mother knew drinking raw milk could be deadly. Unpasteurized milk has been one of the most dangerous sources of contamination since the beginning of time.

Recently I had a conversation with the father of four young children regarding health issues. He was adamant that people should have the choice to drink pasteurized store milk, or buy raw milk from a dairy farmer. The law says a farmer and his family can drink their own raw milk, but they cannot sell it or give the milk away to others.

I've had numerous people tell me that pasteurization kills the bad and the good enzymes. Some folks say they remember their father or grandfather milk cows by hand and saw brownish oozy stuff from the teats go down with the milk into the pail. People drank that milk, they'd say. People drank it and they didn't get sick. They were used to it.

Oh yeah! And why did people die at a much earlier age back then?

Some raw milk advocates consider pasteurization an outdated practice. They claim modern

management techniques and the big fancy dairy barns have reduced risks of raw milk consumption to a safe level.

Dr. Mansel Griffins, a food science professor and chair in dairy microbiology at the University of Guelph, in a recent issue of the Milk Producer said farming practices have changed dramatically, but so have the pathogens that can lurk in raw milk.

"Good husbandry practices do not guarantee the safety of raw milk, even with arguably one of the best milk supplies in the world," he said.

Raw milk can be contaminated with bacteria, including *Brucella* species, *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Coxiella burnetii*, *Escherichia coli*, *Enterotoxigenic Staphylococcus aureus*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Mycobacterium bovis*, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, *Salmonella* species and *Yersinia enterocolitica*.

It's ironic that the farm women in the early part of the last century in Canada supported the move to require milk pasteurization. It was the Women's Institute who acted on the advice of Adelaide Hoodless to have milk pasteurized. But most dairy farm families always drank raw milk. Many still do today in 2008.

Adelaide Sophia Hoodless (Feb. 27, 1858–Feb. 26, 1910) was a Canadian educational reformer who founded the international women's organization known as the Women's Institute.

She was born on a farm in St. George, Ontario, the youngest of 13 children. She married John Hoodless, a Hamilton businessman and moved to Hamilton. They had four children. When her infant son died in 1889 from drinking impure milk, she devoted herself to the betterment of education for new mothers. She learned that had she boiled the milk she gave to her son, he would not have sickened and died. She campaigned for the pasteurization of milk, became president of the Hamilton branch of Young Women's Christian Association and taught classes in home economics.

The Ontario government finally mandated the pasteurization of raw milk. But not until 1938.

*Maynard van der Galien farms at Renfrew, Ontario in the Ottawa Valley. He's downsizing his farming operation.*



### Christian vision...continued from p. 10

(1) Steps should not reinforce ideological spirals but begin "reversing the deadly mutual stimulation" of ideologies. (2) Steps should point to "conversion – a turn in the other direction." (3) Actions should not retaliate or revenge, but serve to remove threats and dismantle hazards. (4) Action steps should work to solve one problem while also positively affecting other problems (pp. 180-188).

#### Virtues and a few vices

*Hope in Troubled Time* has many other virtues and a few vices. It offers a very helpful explanation of complex phenomena such as 9/

11 or the invasion of Iraq with the authors' idea of "ominous multi-ideological spirals" (Part III). The book's analysis of the role of **social structures** in these problems, however, could use more systematic attention. Although it doesn't use the term, the book makes excellent and appropriate use of the reformed concept of sphere sovereignty, or differentiated responsibility, in both its critical analysis and in proposing solutions.

Finally, the book can be tough sledding. We are sometimes told, however, that early immigrant CC readers – sometime with only a grade 8 education! – eagerly

devoured theological, philosophical, and cultural works by leading Christian thinkers. I think *Hope in Troubled Times* would top their reading lists today, because although 'tough sledding,' it truly delivers a new vision for confronting global crises.

*Dr. John Hiemstra is Professor of Political Studies at The King's University College. John is currently on sabbatical researching and writing on: "how can/should we make sense of the oil sands boom in Alberta?" He can be contacted at john.hiemstra@kingsu.ca*



## Nature

# Brushpiles: Recycling for wildlife

Efficiency is accomplishing two things with the effort required for one. When a cottonwood tree came part-way-down in a recent windstorm, I had a job ahead of me: to help it fall the rest of the way safely and then to clean up the mess.

I had help with the first part. A local handyman was finishing up work remodeling the bathroom of our farm home. When I mentioned that I was a little nervous about falling a tree that was leaning and "tied" to the branches of a second tree, he said, "I'm used to that; I used to be a faller." Steve made short work of that leaning cottonwood and the two smaller ones onto which it was leaning. That brought me to the next job: cleaning up.

It's amazing just how many branches and twigs there are in a tree of only fourteen inches diameter. If I were going to buck up and dry the cottonwood trunk for some sort of firewood, I'd have to figure out what to do with all those resin-filled branches.

"That would make a great bonfire!" suggested my friend's seven-year-old son, Joel. There were a several reasons why I thought that a bad idea. First, we'd have to pick up all the branches, load them on a pickup truck, and transport them to a safe place for burning and then unload them. That means work. Second, burning green branches is not very good for air quality.

"Why not build a brushpile?" I asked Joel. "Oh, yeah, I read about that in *Wild* (a nature magazine)," Joel replied. I agreed. Human beings need to realize that they are stewards of the creation, not sole proprietors, so building homes for wildlife has always appealed to me.

While I limbed the trees, Joel dragged and piled them up in a nearby, convenient place, far enough away from my chicken coop that there would no danger even if the pile somehow caught fire. I could also maintain a mowed strip to reduce the danger of spreading fire if that were a concern.



Wildlife loves brushpiles, so I didn't mind disposing of the branches in a way that would sustain life rather than pollute it. Many small birds, such as juncos and thrushes, hang out or nest in and around brushpiles. Grouse are attracted to them for some reason.

Voles and mice find brushpiles convenient shelter; weasels and avian predators hunt rodents in and near brushpiles. As years pass, the brushpile will gradually "melt" into the soil becoming humus.

Final clean-up included bucking-up the trunks of the trees. With the branches out of the way, that job did not take long.

Falling and clean-up mostly accomplished, I realized that I had also solved another problem: cottonwood "rootlings" popping up in my vegetable garden fifty feet away. You might say I already had accomplished three jobs.

The job of stacking the short chunks of

firewood I left until warmer weather when I'll be able to move the firewood a little bit at a time. Unless I can convince Joel to return, in which case, I'll have help.

Joel has a brother, too. Maybe I'll su-



pervise while the two boys finish the job. Every job needs a supervisor, so I'll get out a lawn chair and a coffee while the boys do the work. Maybe I'll even spot a junco. Efficiently.

*Brush pile supervisor Curt Gesch lives in Quick, B.C. He is sad to report that Joel and Isaac Faber, brushpile constructors extraordinaire, have recently moved to Winnipeg. They do not have a business address as of yet, but should be available in the near future to do custom work.*



## Micro coverage a big help for Mexico's poor

Sara Miller Llana

Mexico City Adela Amaya Chavez never considered life insurance. In fact she had no idea what it was.

But on a recent day when inquiring about a loan at Banco Azteca to repair the leaky drains in her home in Mexico City, she was told that if she paid an additional \$2 a week her family would receive \$6,000 if she were to die. Her first thought: the death of her nephew in a car accident in 2003 and the devastation it caused his family. "It was so sudden," says Ms. Amaya Chavez, who cleans office buildings for a living.

She signed up.

Once just a safeguard for the middle and upper classes, insurance is finding its way to all sectors of Mexico. For the poorest, microinsurance policies – often simple plans worth tiny sums of money – are giving protection to those Mexicans who work in the informal economy, often don't have bank accounts, and never dreamed of the luxury of having a Plan B.

Asia and Africa have pioneered microinsurance coverage for everything from death to droughts. But a new government-spon-

sored plan to promote such micropolicies in Mexico – with its sophisticated banking sector and second-largest population in Latin America – could have a ripple effect in the region, experts say. The plan is the first of its kind in Mexico and will focus first on basic life insurance, and later target health and property. What began as a community-based and nonprofit effort is now moving to a commercial venture expected to grow quickly – and could lead millions of Mexicans one step further away from poverty.

"Microinsurance can change tremendously the financial stability of these people," says Alfredo Honsberg, the CEO of Seguros Azteca, which offers tiny policies that cost from 50 cents to \$3 a week for clients who take out loans at Banco Azteca or buy products on credit at Elektra electronic stores, where branches of the bank are housed. "The financial impact [of a tragedy] can be devastating to a low-income family. Even kids cannot go to school because they have to work."

Microinsurance has been inspired by microfinance, which became part of the global lexicon last year when its pioneer, Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus,

The problems of *unwanted* wildlife is something each person or family will have to work out. Too many rabbits spoil the bedding plants. Opposums, raccoons and skunks or woodchucks are not too welcome (I'm fortunate not to have any of those in my area). You may have to think about live-trapping and relocating them – if you can find anyone who wants a few extras of these – or getting a fine fierce dog (and a lot of tomato juice to get rid of skunk smell) – or you may have to think of... well... the opposite of *live-* trapping them. Ask your local wildlife department for more options. We don't have many of these "pests" in our area, but we do have bears and are glad to announce that "our" large, fat black bear comes no nearer to the house than 60 metres, thanks largely to Fine, Fierce Chester, the Wonder Dog. We are not sure we'd want a bear sleeping quite so close to the animals, or house.

Some websites that deal with how to create brushpiles and how they benefit wildlife. <http://dnr.state.il.us/orep/c2000/guide/habitats/backyards/how2help.htm>

**What about brushpiles or rockpiles, which neighbors might consider unsightly?**

Try hiding these in back corners of the property, with tall flowers planted around the perimeter. Dense shrubs can also hide a brushpile or rockpile. And wildlife will actually like it better when the pile is a bit hidden and has a food source nearby.

<http://mdc.mo.gov/documents/forest/3-550.PDF> how to make a brushpile

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/publ/rabitat.pdf> wisconsin rabbits



## Lifestyles



On her own: Microinsurance aims to provide coverage for workers in Mexico's vast informal economy. Workers like Felix Flores, who runs a Mexico City taco stand, are particularly vulnerable.

won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to alleviate poverty. But unlike microcredit loans that have immediate benefits, microinsurance is a tougher sell.

"They've never been exposed to any insurance in the past. These people don't have any bank relationship," says Daniel Garduno, the CEO of Seguros Banamex, which has offered life insurance to clients of Compartamos, Mexico's largest microfinance institution, since November 2006.

That coverage, which has reached 640,000 clients, is worth \$1,400. The group has also launched a pilot program to purchase additional coverage, in increments of \$1,400, for \$1 to \$7 a month. So far Banamex considers it a success: Of all of those offered the product, 50 percent have signed on, or 17,000 individuals. Officials expect to launch the program nationally in August. "The beauty of this is giving access to insurance protection to hundreds of thousands who would never have dreamed of buying an insurance policy," says Jorge Hierro, executive director of institutional relations at Banamex.

Now the government is setting up new standards for microinsurance, to make it easier for institutions to reach the uninsured and to make sure they are protected. Officials hope to have new regulations in place by next month. "We expect massive growth," says Norma Alicia Rosas, the vice president of studies and analysis at Mexico's National Insurance and Finance Commission. "Those with few means should be just as protected as the rest."

The government wants to exempt agents from having to pass

exams to sell microinsurance, as traditional insurance agents must do, since the policies are so simple. It wants policies to be written in simple language, with no exclusions, copays, or deductibles – to reach the largest number of clients while at the same time protecting them.

Across the globe, the world's largest financial institutions are entering the microinsurance fold. "Five years ago you had to tell insurers there was this thing called microinsurance," says Michael McCord, the president of the Microinsurance Centre in Wisconsin, which tracks the industry. "Now it's not what it is, but how do we make it work."

In a report looking at microinsurance in the world's 100 poorest nations, his group counted 246 microinsurers, not including government providers of social security, with 78 million people covered. Not all of the policies are addressing the needs of the populations they serve, however: Mr. McCord says too many are credit life plans that just pay off loans, not give money to the families of the deceased.

But many say that a focus on the poor is the first step toward financial inclusion. "There is debate over how much this is poverty alleviation, or stabilization of income," says Robert Annibale, the Global Director of Microfinance at Citigroup in London. But everyone aspires to get ahead. "For the vast majority it takes time, and going through the many stratas, they should be able to protect themselves and their families through insurance."

Since it launched three years ago, Seguros Azteca has sold 11 million policies. They have also

## In with the new . . . taking stock once again

...not only medicine, engineering and painting  
are arts; living life itself is an art.

Erich Fromm

A young mother and her husband had a child in March, 2007. Soon the mother will have to decide if she is going back to work full-time. While she does not have to work to supplement the family income in terms of basic necessities, money could become tight on one salary. If she decides to work, they will be able to enjoy some financial breathing space. And so, she will need to sit down with her spouse and figure out what their priorities are at this stage of their lives and make a choice that fits with them.

During my years of counselling, I would often remind young mothers they did not have to 'do' it all in every stage of their lives. I would encourage them to have an overall plan but enjoy the stage they are in, so that they would not have tons of regrets in the future. I would also remind them every choice has its costs and rewards. In other words, our life is about choices. Hopefully they reflect the values we hold.

I try to follow my own counsel. If someone would have told me five or ten years ago I would give up my counselling career for my immediate and extended family, I would not have believed them. At that time, I thought most of my family life up to that point had been about 'being all things to all people,' and when the children are grown and gone I would be spending time honing my counselling skills. This was to be my second half of life and I would be doing what I did not have the opportunity to do before.

At the same time, when I was raising our children and attending college for my eventual degree, I went with the proverb; *life happens to you when you make other plans*. And so, my husband's early retirement, my daughter's post partum depression, the birth of additional grandchildren and the needs of my aging mother, all challenged me to 'get a grip' on reality and spend time on what I considered to be important at this stage of my life.

And so, rather than working outside the home, I care for our grandchild while our daughter works as well as care for my mother when my sister needs a break. Furthermore, I spend quality time with my spouse and I am still able to find ways to satisfy my endless curiosity about the world at large. To my surprise, one of a variety of things I learned in the last few years is to 'live in the moment' and 'digest life' in a way that allows me to experience life at its fullest.

Looking back, I believe a curious thing happens

exported the plan to other countries, such as Panama and Peru, and are working toward covering Mexicans working in the US, who send \$20 billion in remittances home each year.

Mr. Honsberg says that microinsurance can help change the cultural mind-set of poorer Mexicans who might not be accustomed to preparing for financial risks. Instead, when disaster strikes, they are forced to improvise: pulling

their children out of school to work, selling a piece of land, or heading to the US.

On a recent day, Claudia Olvera stood in line to make a loan payment on a washing machine and heater that she purchased at Elektra. Last month, when she checked out, she was asked if she wanted to buy life insurance coverage for the course of her loan payment, 51 weeks. Clients can choose coverage ranging from \$1,500

when the pace of life grows faster and faster. Our definition of a 'moment' grows shorter and shorter, moving our awareness of time into ever-tinier increments. By cramming each moment so full of events, we leave ourselves no time to actually experience them in any meaningful way. As a result, the future arrives that much quicker, and it begins to predominate. The 'now' becomes a prelude to the 'next.' Consequently, our emotions take a back seat to the rapid pace of our lives.

The fast track creates a chasm between our emotions and our thoughts, which operate at different speeds. Thoughts are processed electrically, and communicate faster than our hormonal and chemical emotions. The demands of the modern world force us to function more quickly, so we use what is called "mind time" to mentally engage in a way that allows us to multi-task. There is little time to process our slower feelings – what is called 'emotional time.' The result is a disconnection from the world around us, and our sense of being alive in it. Being alive in life, in other words, is about finding a balance between our 'mind time' and our 'emotional or feeling time.'

Of course, being a voracious reader, I had a little help from Julia Cameron's book: *Walking in This World: the Practical Art of Creativity*. Besides my daily tasks, I now faithfully write a few pages of 'Morning Musings' in my journal, I walk as much as I can to stay connected to the sights, sounds and smells of my physical environment, I regularly challenge myself to experience a new environment whether it is garden shop, art gallery or a new or used book store. When I am tired I take time out and make sure I read a few lines of Julia's poem: 'Jerusalem is walking in the world:'

...the air is silk

there is milk in the looks  
that come from strangers

...the pains I take to hide myself  
are sheer as glass  
surely this will pass

...it is all hosannah  
it is all prayer,  
Jerusalem is walking in the world  
Jerusalem is walking in the  
world

Arlene Van Hove is a therapist  
and a member of the Fleetwood  
CRC. She can be reached at  
avanhove@shaw.ca



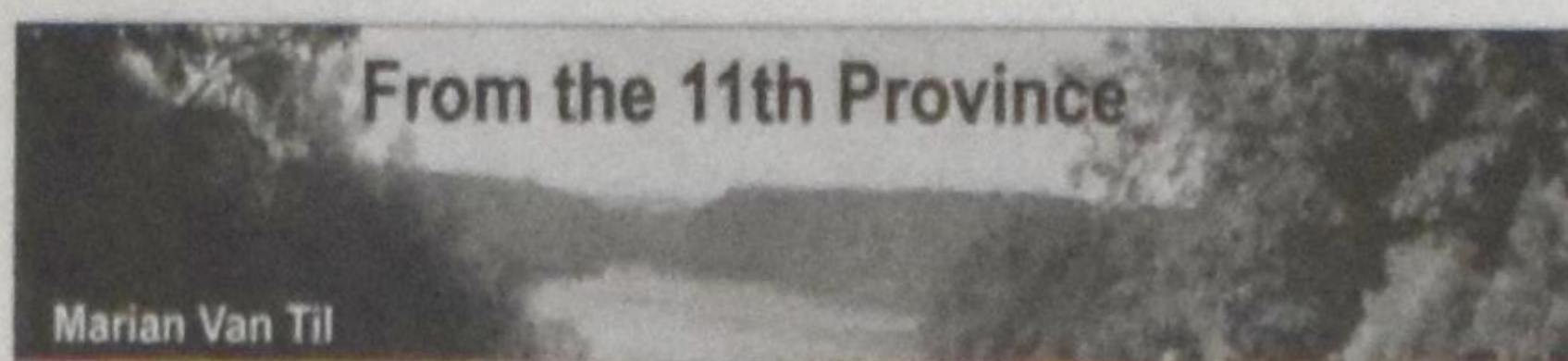
to \$9,000. When they decline a window pops up on the checkout screen: "Remind your clients that this insurance brings tranquility to them and their families."

Ms. Olvera, a single mother of three, didn't need a reminder. She took out a policy for \$1 a week. "What if something were to happen to me?" She says.

Sara Miller Llana is a staff writer  
of The Christian Science Monitor.



## Reflections



From the 11th Province

Marian Van Til

Have you ever contemplated what life would be like without the cycles God has built into us and all creation – without the reliable, comfortable daily and seasonal variations we expect? It's hard to envisage such colorless, timeless monotony, though anybody who lives in the Arctic or Antarctic for a while in either total sunlight or total darkness "day" after "day," may get an idea.

Those day-night and seasonal cycles we experience on our Earth home are more than physical. Day-night and spring-summer-fall-winter have profound impact on us. They take on all kinds of significance – emotional, philosophical, social, spiritual, metaphorical – which affects our entire being, our thought (individual and collective) and our culture and civilization. None of that is an accident, despite what most scientists, anthropologists and environmental film makers today tell us. What joy to know that it was, and is, all meticulously planned by the loving God who created us in *his* image and who *wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants. He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved...* (Psalm 104:2-5).

I'm thinking about this because we're once again at the beginning of a New Year. (As you can see I did not resist my urge to capitalize "New Year." Each annual beginning seems important enough to warrant it.) The wonderful thing about a New Year is that it allows for New Beginnings, just as new days and new seasons do on smaller scales. I find such annual fresh starts important, and I suspect most of us do. That's why we take the time to observe the passing of an old year and the start of a new one with parties, ceremonies and (for some of us) church services.

## Taking stock

Our life of obedience to God in Christ involves a sanctification road, a journey that requires constant taking stock, repentance and renewal. I find that external seasonal signposts, and particularly the beginnings of each new year, are helpful in getting me to do some serious re-evaluating of how I'm doing on that road. Then, that New Year's re-evaluation allows for new resolutions.

Resolutions born of human willpower seem designed to be broken and forgotten, mere fodder for newspaper cartoonists. (So why bother?) But if our resolutions are rooted in the kind of biblical reflection and prayer that is (or should be) always fundamental to our Christian life and striving for greater obedience to God and more perfect conformity to his will, then those resolutions will be rooted in God's strength and will, not ours. And those resolutions will bear fruit, keeping us on the right track, the narrow way. "Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness" (Col. 2:6-7).

We need, anew, to also remind ourselves to think beyond our personal selves and our own ups and downs, however serious the downs may be. That's an ever greater challenge in a world self-obsessed. If I am concerned only with resolving

## From the Old Testament to 2008: 'Great is Thy Faithfulness'

to be a better or healthier or even wealthier me, essentially ignoring God and how I should be doing my work to please him and how I should be interacting with my family, friends, co-workers, church, the broader Christian community and the still-lost world, I've gone back to making the kind of resolutions that are shallowly planted in the sand of human willpower and pride. They will be uprooted at the first stressful gust, becoming chaff on the wind. At heart, I will have forgotten the love I confess for God and my neighbor. And I will be as a resounding gong or clanging cymbal, as Paul describes the unloving/uncharitable in First Corinthians 13.

## Commentary aids Bible study

At the beginning of December 2007 I began reading for Advent, as part of my morning devotions, a commentary on the book of Isaiah. Since Isaiah's prophecies of the Messiah who would come and the salvation he would bring to Israel are prominent in Advent and Christmas Bible readings and services (and in Handel's *Messiah*, which many of us listen to during that time), I wanted to begin re-reading the entire book of Isaiah, figuring that by the time Lent 2008 comes around I would have gotten to the "suffering Servant" parts of Isaiah.

I wanted a readable commentary. In past readings of Isaiah on my own I've felt I was missing meanings and how its 66 chapters and the rest of Scripture hang together; and especially in what ways these Old Testament prophecies still relate to us and our modern world. I'm very happy with the commentary I discovered by John Oswalt, a volume in the *NIV Application Commentary* (Zondervan). This Isaiah volume includes the English biblical text (NIV), looks at its original meaning, "bridging contexts," and contemporary significance.

As it happened, some other Advent devotions that my husband and I were reading (he was home from work for a week) caused me to get somewhat behind where I intended to be at the beginning of 2008 in reading and studying Isaiah.

## LORD of history

My 2008 resolutions led me back to Isaiah this morning. Lo and behold, the first thing I noticed was that the passage I began to read (10:5-34) was entirely appropriate to important things I needed to remind myself of at the beginning of this New Year. I wasn't at all surprised. The living Spirit of God that inspired Isaiah and all the authors of his written Word in the first place is still at work in that Word, making sure that nothing returns to

him empty, as God says later through Isaiah (55:11).

The passage I read today presents the REALLY BIG picture: God is Lord of not just individuals, not just of his covenant people, but all peoples and all of history and creation. As you know, the book of Isaiah contains many pronounced judgments against Israel for their abandonment of God and his covenant with them (and for their consequent unjust and evil behavior). Israel must come to terms with *Him*, not with the pagan nations who seem in control their own destiny. (There is always hope in the midst of sin, however. God does not *want* to destroy his people or any of his creatures. He offers salvation in more ways than one.)

In this part of Chapter 10, God tells Israel that he will use Assyria, their mighty enemy, to punish them for their perversity. And when God is finished using the boasting, narcissistic Assyrian king and his armies as a "rod" against Israel, Assyria will pay for its own sins. In all this, a remnant of Israel will survive – and out of that remnant would come the Messiah.

Therefore, the people of Judah should not fear Assyria. As Oswalt puts it, "Their foreign policy and their spiritual outlook should not be shaped by either the offers or the threats of that great power." (Think about how that applies today.) The passage makes shining-clear the need to acknowledge God's Lordship, keeping a proper perspective on *everything* in life in light of that truth about God's ordering of all things.

While acknowledging God's control of our lives and all lives is comforting, it's not something that we always like to do. Our pride likes to claim that *we* are in control of our own destiny, as individuals, as families, even as nations. When we human beings presume to be the Potter instead of the clay, and when we worship the creation instead of the Creator, we guarantee ourselves serious correction from God (sooner or later), and doom if we ultimately refuse to change our ways.

## Narrow is the way that leads to life

What about that "remnant," which now includes us, Christ's church, in an increasingly perverse world? Oswalt makes an observation that would startle some of my mainline Protestant friends who admit they don't often read their Bibles outside of church. He writes, *From Genesis on, the Scriptures portray the concept of a hand-ful maintaining the faith while the masses go to perdition. It is explicit with the family of Noah in the Flood and implicit with the family of Abraham following the Tower of Babel. It is explicit with Sodom and Gomorrah, and*

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## Business Directory

and while the number of those entering the Promised Land is as great as the number of those who left Egypt, it could have reasonably been expected to be a good deal greater, given geometric progression. In fact, the second generation is a remnant. Again and again throughout the history of Israel, the continuation of the faith seems to hang by a shoestring, such as the boy Samuel when the priesthood was deeply corrupted, or the boy David when the entire army of Israel was cowed before the giant. In other words, despite the fact that biblical faith is a community faith, it is not a mass faith. That is faithfulness always is intentional and accountable, and that often comes down to a handful.

As "unfair" and unpalatable as we may think it is, that's the disconcerting route God has chosen for the history of salvation. "Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. Broad is the way to destruction and narrow the way that leads to life," asserts Jesus himself (Matt. 7:13-14).

Since we are part of the remnant of believers we must be careful that we adopt neither a ghetto mentality (maintaining a superior-minded fortress against the unbelieving

world we don't really care about), a woe-is-me attitude (wallowing in self-pity, wondering what we can do about so insidious a problem), nor a spirit of denial that second-guesses or disbelieves the Author of salvation when he warns that narrow is the road to life.

A dear friend of mine told me recently that she feels ever more alienated from the anti-Christian spirit of Canadian society. She feels "almost persecuted" and increasingly isolated as a Christian in Canada. Though the situation is somewhat different in the U.S., I entirely understand how she feels. We know, of course, that God will preserve his church and will keep us in his hand, whether we must face more overt persecution, the impending advances of atheistic secularism, the spread of Islamic fascism, or some other evil spirit.

Through Isaiah God frequently reminded Israel of his faithfulness to them in the past and of the mighty acts he had performed on their behalf. Our own cultivating of the memory of God's mercies – personally, in our families, our church, and his worldwide Body going all the way back to his the New Testament church and his Old Testament people, will help keep us a faithful remnant; a faithful remnant which prays for the salvation of the lost

even while we may have to suffer at their hands.

Marian Van Til worked for Christian Courier from 1984-2000, and preceded Harry der Nederlanden as its editor. She now lives in Youngstown, NY. She may be contacted by email at:

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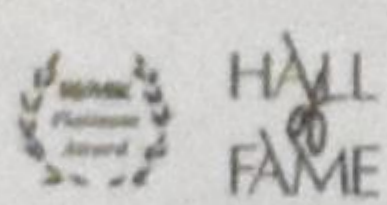


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## Classifieds

## Birthdays

On January 29th, 2008

**Grace (Grietje) Sliemers**

hopes to celebrate her 90th birthday.

We, Alice & Martin Kaldeway  
John & Jennifer Kaldeway,  
Emmalin, Alexander, Sarah, Jasmine and Hanna,  
Ingrid & Andrew O'Connell  
Scott and Judith Kaldeway, Maddy and Calvin  
Anna Morris-Sliemers  
Kassie (Ryan), Stephanie, Yvonne  
Jane and Alan O'Connor and Tim

thank God for the love and care shown to her and  
to us throughout all these years.

Congratulations!

We love you Mom, Oma and Great Oma!

TT 408-7900 McLaughlin Rd,  
Brampton ON L6Y 5A7

With thanksgiving and all praise to God  
we are pleased to announce that  
on December 31, 2007

**Wilma de Haan (Bakker)**

celebrated with her family and friends  
the occasion of her 90th Birthday.

Spouse – Cornelis de Haan (†1979)

Children: Sid & Frieda, Abbotsford, B.C.  
Bertha & Bob Johnson, Burlington, Ont.  
Shadde & Dianne, Waterloo, Ont.  
Anno & Diane, Kamloops, B.C.  
Betty & Tim Van de Kemp, Embro, Ont.  
Janna, Newmarket, Ont.  
Pearl & Hugh Verstoep, Moncton, Ont.  
29 Grandchildren & 34 Great-grandchildren

Correspondence may be sent to: Wilma de Haan  
Apt 3 - 94 McCarthy Rd  
Stratford ON N5A 7K8  
(519)273-7156

## Obituaries

Peacefully at home with family at his side on  
Wednesday December 12, 2007 in his 82nd year

**RUDY JOHAN HUFTEN**

of Orillia

Much loved husband of Jane Huften (nee  
Moesker) for 56 years.

Loving father of John & his wife Mardi of Orillia,  
Janet Veeneman – predeceased (husband  
John), Fred & Suzanne of Orillia, Joyce Shels-  
well of Penticton BC, Linda & her husband  
George Oudyk of Oshawa.

Loving opa to Rudy (Amanda), Matthew,  
Emily, James, Christina (TW), Jonathan (Tara),  
Robert, Scott, Heidi, Chloe, Simon, Sophie,  
Sheldon, Marshall, Mitchell, Michael and  
Jordan. Great-opa of Luke, William, Samantha  
and Gabrielle. Dear brother of Lide and her  
husband Dik Schuit of the Netherlands and the  
late Gerhrad and Hans Huften.

Funeral services were held at the First Christian  
Reformed Church in Orillia on December 15 with  
interment at St Andrew-St James Cemetery.

Memorial donations to the Heart and Stroke  
Foundation of Ontario or the Canadian Cancer  
Society would be appreciated by the family.

Correspondence: Jane Huften  
391 Bay Street, Orillia ON L3V 3X5

Drayton, December 2007

After a lengthy illness  
the Lord took to himself our dear friend

**KLAAS BENNING**

at the age of 75 years.

Psalm 23: 4

It is our hope and prayer that Teresa and her  
family may be comforted by the promises of  
the Lord and the love of his people.

Henk & Roelie Katerberg  
Hilbert & Diny Rumph

**MARISA ALISON VANDERVEEN**

(November 8, 1974)



On December 6, 2007 Marisa's  
cancer was taken away by Jesus.  
Marisa was happily married to  
Mendelt Hoekstra for almost 10  
years. She is the beloved mother of our children,  
Zion, Jacoba and Zekijah.

Marisa is the daughter of Chris & Ann VanderVeen,  
the sister to Monica & Greg Vandertuin and sister to  
Christy VanderVeen.

Marisa is the daughter-in-law to Gerzinus & Jean-  
netta Hoekstra and sister-in-law to Frances & James  
Olson, John & Henri Hoekstra, Monique Hoekstra &  
Alec Home-Douglas, Jacoba & Peter Doris and Klaas  
& Tanya Hoekstra.

Marisa is the favourite aunt of 15 nieces & nephews.

Marisa wanted those who loved her to know how  
much she appreciated all the many saints who  
surrounded her over the past 33 years.

Marisa does not have cancer anymore.

Shine on Marisa, shine on.

A memorial donation can be made to a trust fund for  
our children Zion, Jacoba and Zekijah.

Please visit [www.marisavanderveen.wordpress.com](http://www.marisavanderveen.wordpress.com)  
for more details.

On Dec. 16, 2007, after a brief illness but saved from  
more suffering, our heavenly Father took to himself our  
beloved husband, father, father-in-law and grandfather

**HENRY DUNNEWOLD**

at the age of 81.

He is survived by his wife of almost 54 years  
Hermine Dunnewold nee Jansen

His children: Bill† (1981)

Alice & husband Greg Gauthier, Ottawa  
Granddaughter Adrian Gauthier

Rob and fiancée Lily, Toronto  
Joanne at home

Psalm 46

Correspondence: Hermine Dunnewold  
383952 Salford Rd, Salford ON N0J 1W0

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- Had a comprehensive year-long pastoral experience as an Intern Pastor in Forest, Ontario in 2005
- Graduated from Calvin Seminary in 2006
- Currently working part-time as Director of Education at Georgetown CRC
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  - Preaching
  - Pastoral ministry to various age groups
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For references and further information,  
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Tel. No. 647-241-9307, email: [knorris7@gmail.com](mailto:knorris7@gmail.com)

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Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697  
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Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Tuesday, 13 days prior to publication date.

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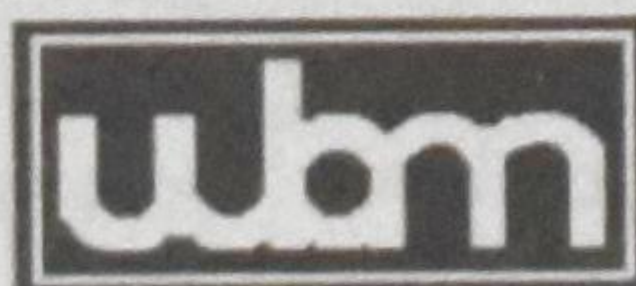
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## Events/Advertising

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Jan 13 Dutch Service** will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Jacob Kuntz will be preaching.

**Jan 27** Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge** 50th anniversary. A special service to be held at 10 a.m. More events will be held in April.

**Feb 15-17** Marriage encounter weekend in **Niagara Falls**, ON. For more information or to register on-line, go to [www.reformedme.org](http://www.reformedme.org) or contact Chris & Cindy Otten at 519-393-5163 or by email at Ontario\_Registration@reformedme.org.

**April 19, 20** Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge** 50th anniversary. Celebrations and special events will be held on Saturday April 19 at 7 p.m. and Sunday April 20 during the 10 a.m. service.

**May 2-4** Marriage encounter weekend in **London**, ON. For more information or to register on-line, go to [www.reformedme.org](http://www.reformedme.org) or contact Chris & Cindy Otten at 519-393-5163 or by email at Ontario\_Registration@reformedme.org.



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We would like to extend a special invitation to all former members as well as those who would like to celebrate with us.

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Jeremiah 29:11



### DUTCH SERVICE

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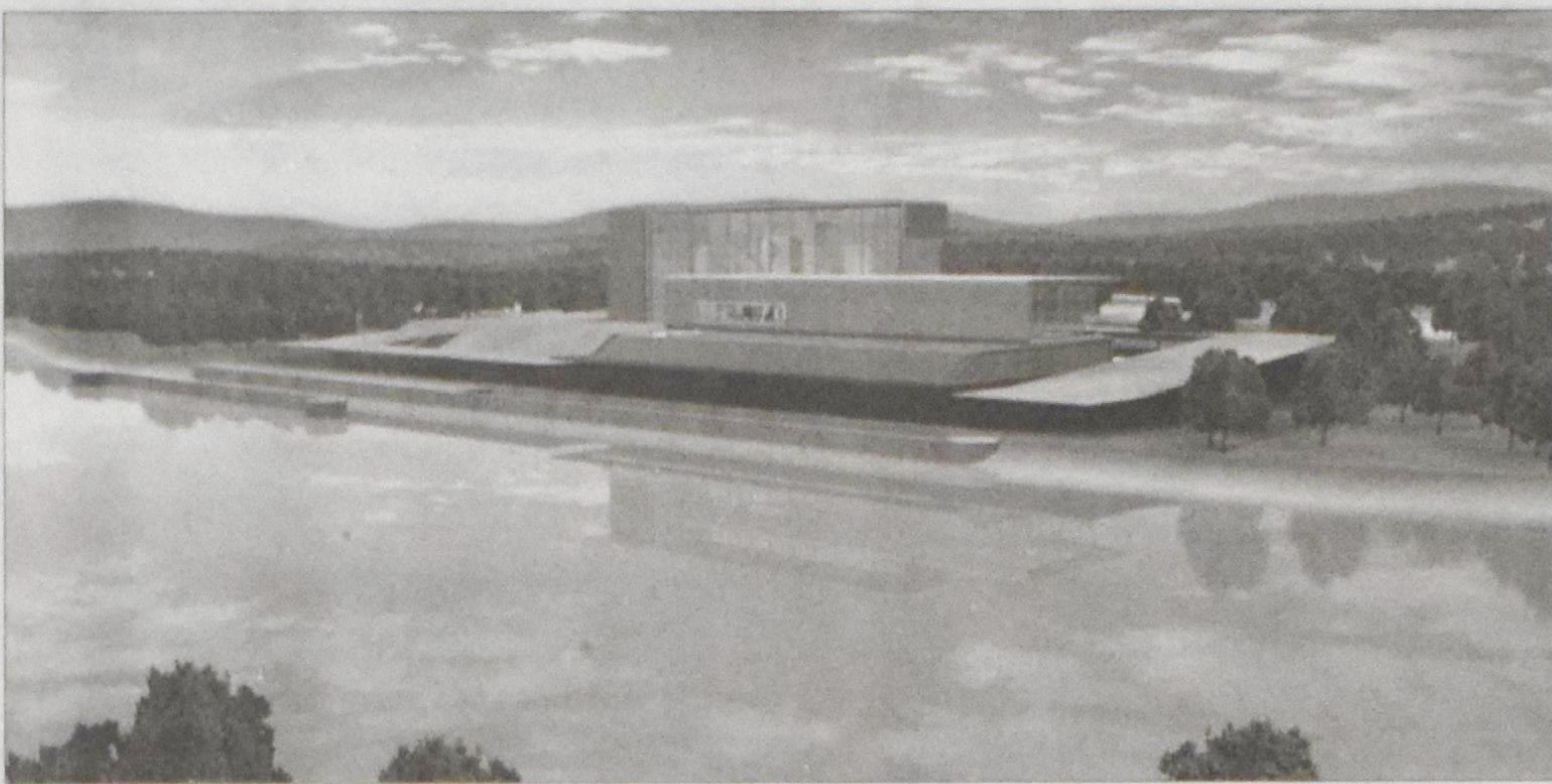
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## News

## FutureGen to build 'clean coal' plant in Illinois



Artist's sketch

**The \$1.8 billion facility will demonstrate a novel technology to fight global warming.**

**Mark Clayton**

A solution to America's energy challenge – turning its coal reserves into a clean fuel – is a step closer to reality.

A government-industry alliance announced Tuesday that it would put a \$1.76 billion "clean coal" power plant in Mattoon, Ill. By 2013, the plant is expected to start cranking out 275 megawatts of electricity from gasified coal while emitting almost no pollutants and only 10 percent of the carbon dioxide from today's coal-fired plants. The taxpayer-supported project, called FutureGen, joins a global race to develop clean-coal technology.

But it comes at an odd time for the utility industry. Even though the United States agreed this past weekend to pursue an international greenhouse-gas reduction pact, the US government has announced no plans or guidelines for future regulation or taxation for carbon. Facing such uncertainties and escalating costs to build power plants, utilities have scaled back their construction plans, especially for plants powered by coal. The dozen or so proposed plants using clean-coal technology similar to FutureGen – called integrated gasification-combined cycle or IGCC technology – represent less than half the number of plants on the drawing boards just six months ago, analysts say.

"Until there's a carbon policy framework that makes it clear for industry how they can take advantage of the edge IGCC has

in carbon emissions over conventional power, this new technology faces the same go-slow approach," says Alex Klein, senior analyst at Emerging Energy Research, a Cambridge, Mass., energy market research firm.

That slowdown could make FutureGen even more key to the future of IGCC technology. If the US is to use its massive coal reserves – estimated to last roughly 200 years – FutureGen-style gasification technology will be vital, many analysts say.

"FutureGen's role has become even more important to the US utility industry as a demonstration of what's possible because of the cost and uncertainty over carbon-emissions regulation that the industry has seen over the past six months," says Steve Jenkins, vice president for gasification services at CH2M Hill, one of the nation's leading engineering firms, based in Denver.

FutureGen is already paying dividends, Mr. Jenkins adds. The massive environmental-impact statement conducted prior to getting the Mattoon site approved has laid out an engineering road map for private industry to follow. The statement covered contingencies from tiny leaks to massive releases of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Unlike a conventional power plant that burns coal and emits carbon dioxide and other pollutants, IGCC plants gasify coal then separate the polluting gases from hydrogen, which is burned and drives turbines, generating electricity.

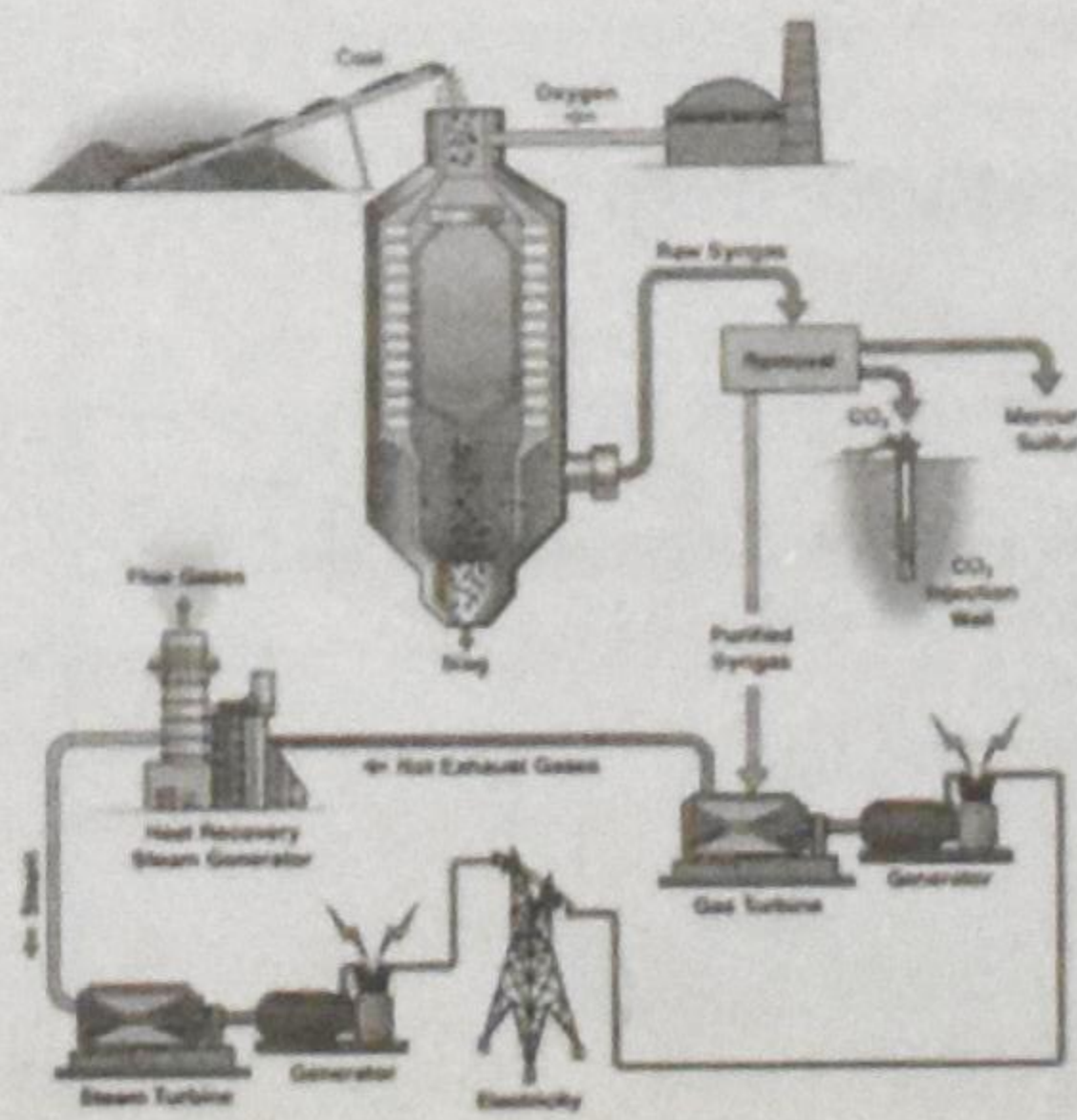
What happens to the polluting gases, however, is key. FutureGen's main aim

is to demonstrate for US utilities – and a consortium of international partners like China – that it's cost-effective to capture 90 percent of the carbon dioxide emissions and pump them into permanent storage deep underground. While other IGCC plants on the drawing boards could do the same, it's unclear that they will.

At least a dozen IGCC plants are planned nationwide with three already in advanced permitting stages in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Even with fewer plants proposed, the US still leads the world with nearly 60 percent of the planned IGCC power plant capacity.

Some environmentalists say utilities should be forced to build IGCC plants that capture and sequester CO<sub>2</sub>.

"We like FutureGen and think it's a fine project," says John Thompson, head of the Coal Transition Project for the Clean Air Task Force, an environmental group based in Boston. "But since there are actually some commercial plants that use similar technology, though not as advanced, we believe they could and should capture carbon dioxide at some level."



## News Digest

### A Grand Vision for solar energy farms

**Harry DerNederlanden**

A long article in the *Scientific American* of Dec. 16, 2007 outlines a "Solar Grand Plan" for the U.S. that would supply 69 percent of its electricity and 35 percent of its total energy by 2050. Precise numbers like 69 in a largely speculative plan like this always strike me as a bit suspicious, but the article does raise hopes about an alternative energy source.

Many energy critics assume that solar energy will never provide much more than a minor supplement to traditional energy sources. Usually, too, the assumption is that it will consist mainly of small-scale installments that serve single households or businesses. But the minds at *Scientific American* are thinking big. They envision a switch to solar power on a massive scale – huge solar farms that cover tens of thousands of acres.

By their calculation there are at least 250,000 square miles in the *American Southwest* suitable for solar farming. That area is bombarded by 4,500 quadrillion BTU of solar energy per year. If photovoltaic cells are able to convert only 2.5 percent of that sunlight into electricity, says the article, "that would match the U.S. total energy consumption in 2006." That looks very, very impressive on paper. But is it realistic?

Yes, says the *Scientific American*: the technology is here already. It will require a huge investment, of course. But the Grand Plan envisions the elimination of all imported oil from the Middle East as well as the closing of 300 oil-fired plants and 300 natural gas plants. So it envisions a revolutionary shift in energy use.

The cost of the main component that is basic to this magnashift to solar power – the photovoltaic cell – has been dropping and their efficiency increasing. And the study projects further increases in efficiency and further drops in cost due to increased scales of production. And although the project would require tens of thousands of acres to produce electricity on the projected scale, the article points out that coal mining destroys thousands of acres of land. Solar farms would be far less stressful to their environment.

The main drawback of solar power is the drop in production on cloudy days and at night. So ways must be found to store energy for those times when the sun is gone. Batteries are inefficient and expensive. But there are other ways to store energy. One way is by using some of the energy to compress air during daylight hours. On off hours this compressed air can then be used to turn turbines that generate electricity.

To distribute all this solar power from farms in the Southwest, however requires the construction of an entirely new grid of transmission lines. The existing lines are designed for alternating current and would lose too much energy. So that requires another huge investment.

To accomplish the goals of the *Scientific American's* Grand Plan, 46,000 square miles of the American Southwest would have to be covered with solar panels. The plan also assumes that in the future the photovoltaic cells will increase in efficiency and drop in cost and that ways will be found to store vast amounts of energy to accommodate cloudy days. But even if the plan is overly optimistic in its calculations, it does raise hopes about the viability of solar power on a much larger scale.

### Canadian feasibility

How that translates for northern climates like that of Canada is hard to tell. In the Niagara Peninsula, for example, we can have week after week of cloudy weather. That would make solar farms a hugely unreliable source of power. Alberta gets much more sunshine. Maybe it can use its projected oil windfalls to construct solar farms in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan. A solar farm the size contemplated by the *Scientific American* would only cover about 20 percent of the province. However, since we have only about 10 percent of the U.S. population, maybe we could do with about 2 percent.

Fat chance? Undoubtedly. But aspects of this plan seem every bit as rational as planting tens of thousand of acres with crops to turn into biofuels to power our 300 horsepower automobile engines.